



ETHNOGRAPHIES OF NEOLIBERALISM

Edited by Carol J. Greenhouse

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EDITED BY
CAROL J. GREENHOUSE

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Introduction

CAROL J. GREENHOUSE

“During the second half of the twentieth century,” Timothy Mitchell writes, “economics established its claim to be the true political science” (Mitchell 2002: 272). Neoliberalism—the prevailing approach (for now) to government that supplants regulation by law with market forces, and government functions (especially in the service sector) by private enterprise—brings economics and politics together in even more encompassing terms. In its ideological coherence around the primacy of the private sector, the release of organizations and industries from government regulation, the creation of powerful nonstate transnational institutions and global market regimes, and the assurance of the market’s self-regulating character, neoliberalism might seem to offer classic social theory its smoothest mirror.¹ In theory, that mirror gives back a vision of “society” as the cumulative product of free individuals, loose of all but the most necessary constraint by the state—capital unfettered except to their interests and tastes, invested in ways that yield maximum value for shareholders, and through them, for everyone who inhabits this world of ideas and things.²

In practice, there are also other figures in the mirror: along with structural adjustment and soaring capital accumulation among the newly wealthy come permanent impoverishment and divided communities; privatization is accompanied by social fragmentation and democracy deficit; market values do not consistently sustain public services; outsourcing contributes to the destructuring of local economies and displacement of workers; liberty may take the form of abandonment; deregulation permits loss of accountability; unemployment and routinization of work allow the development of novel forms of alienation; the marketization of institutions creates improvised forms of empowerment and social reconstruction; national investments in global capitalism facilitate new regionalisms and—for citizens—new subalterities and risks of marginalization and insecurity.³ The social effects of neoliberalism are by no means wholly negative, but understanding them calls into question taken-for-granted ideas about consent and dissent (Cahn 2008) and, more broadly, social life—for ordinary people and social scientists alike.

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Accordingly, this book begins in the fact that neoliberalism—as *experience*—necessarily involves problems of interpretation, some of them fundamental to the shape of the future. From the standpoint of *those* questions, the true political science for the twenty-first century may well be ethnography. Ethnography—iconically but misleadingly associated with sociocultural anthropology’s ventures onto remotely foreign fields—is a mode of inquiry now in wide circulation across the human sciences. Broadly speaking, it is the science of contextualization—context construed through personal relationships bound by self-knowledge, expectation, and commitment, and by language, memory, and imagination to registers and relativities of experience beyond the present here and now, including the felt import (whether by adherence or coercion or something in between) of collective institutions. *Culture* is one shorthand term for these knowledge practices and their social effects in time and place. Not merely *narrative-based* or generically *qualitative*, ethnography asks cultural questions comparatively, reaching for the significance of diverse particulars through the scrim of generalization that (however variously) sustains the conventions of social description (e.g., in law, niche marketing, mass media, and quantitative social sciences). Against the claims of such generalities, ethnographers will always ask “For whom?” “By whom?” “With what alternatives in view?” “Understood how?” “With what effects?” among other questions aimed at understanding *history* with its alternatives left in and of *society* with actual people—living with others as partners and as members of publics construed somehow—left in. It is only with such questions in view that an ethnographer arrives—through the layered fabric of meaning and experience—at the present. Ethnography, in contemporary usage, does not always involve “fieldwork” in the conventional sense, but it always involves experience-based inquiry into the interpretive, institutional, and relational makings of the present. The contributors to this volume are ethnographers from diverse disciplinary and methodological formations, each concerned to understand neoliberalism’s challenges and opportunities to people living with neoliberal reform, as well as with the potential for taking ethnography into new comparative and interpretive domains.

“Neoliberalism,” Aihwa Ong writes, “is reconfiguring relationships between governing and the governed, power and knowledge, and sovereignty and territoriality” (2006: 3). More than this, it is reconfiguring people’s relationships to each other, their sense of membership in a public, and the conditions of their self-knowledge. This book’s main contention is that neoliberal reform—now a generation or more in the making—has restructured the most prominent public relationships that constitute *belonging*: politics, markets, work, and self-identity. These are the critical forms of social connection that neoliberalism’s emphasis on the separation of state and society and the marketization of their relation puts in doubt—in everyday life and as matters of social theory.

Indeed, the social effects of neoliberalism pose a significant challenge to classic social theory—essentially inverting Emile Durkheim’s thesis regarding interpersonal exchange as the building block of society. Writing in the early 1890s, Durkheim envisioned two forms of what he called *solidarity*—that is, the sense of being connected through a social bond. As a heuristic device, Durkheim sketched two types of solidarity—mechanical and organic. Mechanical solidarity is a social bond based on the common allegiance of individuals to the group through a religious or political authority—an alignment that produces unity through obedience and deference and that demands conformity. The bonds of organic solidarity, on the other hand, are produced through interdependence and self-knowledge—self-knowledge realized (literally and figuratively) in a social division of labor predicated on mutually relevant expertise. Under conditions of organic solidarity, Durkheim wrote, authority is more dispersed, and more flexible, since *society* is made not by allegiance but by cooperation. Where mechanical solidarity prefers (or insists on) sameness, organic solidarity flourishes with diversity, encouraging individuals to know themselves and making difference a social asset. The two types of solidarity can coexist, but the conditions for organic solidarity and its thick ethical mesh are more readily found in industrial societies (Durkheim’s riposte to Marx). Thus, organic solidarity has long been imagined to be the more modern form of society—giving prominence to the public and its associations over the formal institutions of state and society in relation to questions of norms, values, and authority. This premise is deeply wired into the methodological canons of ethnography, whether in anthropology or its sister disciplines in the human sciences. We study societies through their constitutive partnerships and associations, not through their governments or laws alone, for this reason.

Neoliberalism challenges this premise, however—though it is easy enough to continue to study local social life as if this were not the case. In its valorization of the individual, its preference for markets over rights as the basis for social reform, and its withdrawal of the state from the service sector, neoliberalism overwrites older notions of the public based in organic solidarity with a strong mechanical overlay—as an improvement, or modernization, of more traditional social bonds. Understanding this inversion is crucial to understanding the nature of the interpretive questions to which neoliberalism gives rise in everyday life, since neoliberal reform reshapes the relationship between society and the state without eliminating what came before. As Jean and John Comaroff write: “While it can never fully succeed, [neoliberalism’s] advance . . . has profoundly altered, if unevenly in space and time, the phenomenology of being in the world” (2001a: 14–15).

The contributors to this volume show that the social effects of neoliberal reform are not limited to the vertical relationships between state and society, but that they also affect the lateral relationships among individuals—even intimate relationships, as well as communities and intersecting publics. They

further show that the social effects of neoliberalism are potentially its limiting conditions—since popular adaptations and resistance to neoliberalism’s effects yield characteristic forms of agency and sociability that push back against the consumer-based individualism so central to the social engineering inherent in neoliberal reform. The chapters detail these in various registers—some more overtly political in highly public ways, others less obviously so in more intimate settings. The essays deal centrally with interpretive ambiguities arising from the most prominent social effects in neoliberalism: in the nature and limits of authority, the purposes of social partnership, the sustainability of communities, and the relevance of self-knowledge—the very issues that mark the distinctions Durkheim drew between his two types of solidarity. In such contexts, the nature of political agency is anything but clear, and in its quality of being attuned to incongruity in the conditions of everyday sociability, ethnography emerges as a “method of hope” (Miyazaki 2004: 140).

The “politics of interpretation” (Cavell 1984: 27ff.) under neoliberalism is easily missed or evaded by participants and observers alike, given a marked tendency for neoliberal political restructuring and resignification to borrow from older social forms—for example, borrowing the language of rights to sustain markets, citizens’ forums to deflect social movements, public office for pursuit of private interests, and credit relationships as channels of social control (see Greenhouse 2005a; Gregory 1997; D. Nugent 2001 and 2002; Roitman 2005). To be sure, identity and agency have been major theoretical and comparative issues for the human sciences for decades—the same decades in which the idioms of neoliberal reform have become entrenched as the dominant global discourse of state-society relations. One implication of the collection is that this is not a coincidence—that *identity* and *agency* acquired a progressive valence (as well as promise in comparative terms) that was warranted in advance by the vision of organic solidarity hardwired to the fundamentals of ethnography.

With one exception, the essays are ethnographic—and ethnographic in diverse ways, some offering encounter-based accounts of social interaction, others turned more to questions of the context of personal experience rather than accounts of experiences directly observed, yet others probing contexts that conjure new ethnographic objects in the conditions of sovereignty and solitude, among other things. The exception (by Rodgers and Macedo) was not undertaken as an ethnographic project but offers an important survey of the contemporary varieties and dispersal of political agencies (literal and figurative) in the United States across different types of jurisdictional mandates. Their findings are suggestive for new ethnographic locations and comparative possibilities. All of the contributors identify their own itineraries across the relatively unexplored zone between political economy and interpretive ethnography—regrettably still often imagined to be a methodological no-man’s-land. Recognizing the extent to which political economy entails problems of

meaning (and not just managerial or strategic aspects of social life) expands ethnography's scope and relevance to the social sciences more usually associated with the analysis of contemporary life on a large scale. Emergent anthropological scholarship on the social effects of neoliberalism has emphasized the new forms of regionalism and translocality that it fosters.⁴ In this book's interdisciplinary accounts, it is also *localism* that demands to be retheorized, as privatization and marketization collapse important elements of the difference between what used to be thought of as "levels" of society and government—in the process creating openings for highly localized forms of authority and alliance that are not reliably readable as parts of a whole or as microcosms of some system.

The chapters explore novel forms of privatized public authority, new markets for identity, the conflation of citizenship and consumption, and the association of citizenship with particular registers of performance, among other issues involving the making of meaning in worlds no longer (if they ever were) neatly divided between the public and private. The consequences suggest the extent to which people—even in solitude—see themselves as acting on a public stage. This dual ethnographic and reflexive possibility—linking agency to interpretation—is the major provocation of the essays.

Part of that provocation arises from the contradictions in neoliberalism itself. Neoliberal reform "arrives" through state institutions yet as a commitment to dismantling the state in some respects (by delegation, deregulation, and privatization in particular; see Aman 2004). These are not merely conceptual paradoxes; they are practical ambiguities that complicate and fragment the field of personal and collective choice in managing the everyday—potentially fragmenting the social fields of self-identity and investment (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001a: 15; see also Speed 2005: 45). Whereas liberal theory posits modern states as a form of social organization, a culmination of bureaucratic rationality in the Weberian sense, neoliberal states are also vectors of *disorganization* as pervasive marketization disrupts or displaces nonmarket-based regimes of value and the relationships they sustain. In this respect, the neoliberal state is a "disordering order that divides humanity against itself and sets it against nature" (Coronil 1997: 394). At the same time, it is precisely the uncoordinated character of localized political systems and the expanded arenas for political expression that under other circumstances make the neoliberal city an opening to broader participation in the public sphere within capitalist frameworks (Castro Lucic 2005: 128).

Another important source of contradiction in neoliberalism—and the main reason it eludes a general definition or critical assessment—is that the global spread of neoliberal reform involves the initiation and harmonization of complex transnational institutional agendas through individual states. Neoliberalism endorses the expansion of the private sector as the basis for governance, but neoliberal reform as a *process* requires extensive state action through legis-

latures, courts, and, above all, through the executive branch. The role of states in mediating globalization and, to an even greater degree, the “production” of globalization through domestic political processes is not well appreciated in the ethnographic literature on the subject (but see Mines 2002).⁵

Further contradictions arise from the fact that the world refashioned by neoliberalism is one in which “concrete localities” are “multiscalar” (Sassen 2004: 176), which means, among other things, that the conditions of self-identity are layered and discontinuous. This means suspending one’s belief in an inevitable ordering of local, regional, national, international, and global “arenas” as a concentric arrangement of progressively larger scale phenomena (see Tsing 2000). Robert Rodgers and Stephen Macedo’s essay in this volume examines the disparities in the organization and demographics of political participation as between state and local government in the United States, but the point is more generally relevant, amounting to a fundamental challenge to the conventions of scale. As a case in point, post-9/11 New York and post-Katrina New Orleans have become iconic neoliberal cities, but as each other’s inverse. Both situations feature intergovernmentality, capitalism, social history, and insecurity—tuned this way as the very image of national state security, tuned that way as a composite portrait of societal failure at the local level. More fundamentally, taken *together*, they represent the “state of exception” (the emergence of lawlessness from law) as a quintessentially *urban* condition “neither external nor internal to the juridical order” (Agamben 2005: 23, 36)—or, perhaps more accurately in each of these examples, *both* internal and external to the juridical order, each requiring the other but only as each other’s “silver lining” (Brooks 2005).⁶

It was the circumstances of the Bush administration’s war on terror that occasioned Giorgio Agamben’s reflections on the conditions that produce lawlessness from law—in particular, the proximity of legal formalism (i.e., emphasis on legal form) and lawlessness (i.e., absence or voiding of legal substance).⁷ But the legal innovations of the war on terror are in some ways continuous with the legal order of neoliberalism—that is, in the legal formalism of deregulation and the planned lawlessness of privatization, both of which are processes largely controlled by the executive branch. Neoliberalism favors (in practice) the expansion of executive power—discursively positioning the national executive in a global order, while diminishing or eliminating the regulatory powers of the representative branch (Aman 2004: 31). Taken together, deregulation and privatization restructure *government* around the executive branch, set over *society* as the mechanism of *governance*. In heightened form, this is the essence of the security state; two chapters deal directly with the war on terror but all of them are periodized in the post-9/11 world. They emphasize the discontinuity or (in effect) lumpiness of political space even within governments, as well as across the ambiguous zones between private and public sectors, local and national life, labor and leisure (among other things)—each

of these zones occasioning improvisational self-identities and experimental gambits in personal and collective agency.⁸

These brief observations underscore the importance of taking ethnographic account of local social life as something other than a particle of a larger public sphere, or as if they were nested fields of congruent shape (like a Russian doll). “The local” is not a station in a continuous flow of power, a mechanism for rationing and distributing power throughout “the system.” The illusion of vertical continuity is critical to governmentality (the “art of government” [Foucault 1991: 91]). But privatization greatly complicates “governability” (Foucault 1991: 95) in precisely this sense, since it also creates ungovernable zones, as recent disasters have revealed “even” in the United States—revealing at the same time that neoliberal governance neither offers a guarantee of belonging nor attaches a stable value to it. Thus, governmentality may appear to be (or may actually be) “diffuse” (Butler 2004: 56–62) yet still involve highly concentrated coercive powers (e.g., in community development and delivery of social services). Thus privatization supplements and compounds sovereign power as it carries the state’s logo into new sectors or actively withholds it. Privatization entails no automatic additive or subtractive relation to state power, given the concatenation of interests and institutional practices through which privatization is authorized and sustained as a practical matter.

Grassroots political agency in such zones of administrative chaos, concentration, and neglect is sometimes emergent as a force of moral judgment—for example, expressed as conspiracy theories (Briggs 2004), aspirations to “redemption through the ballot box” (Fassin and Vasquez 2005), privatized and paramilitary violence under the rubric of “cleansing” (Taussig 2003), reconfigurations of citizenship (Petryna 2002), claims to occult power (West 2005), and as novel ethnographic positionalities (Fortun 2001). Such registers may seem abstract, or exotic, but modern states are potentially remade through such judgments. For all of these reasons, the chapters involve quite different locations, scales and depths of field, modes of inquiry, and types of evidence; this, indeed, is part of the point. Social domains and cultural practices once imagined to be separate yield new comparative and cross-disciplinary perspectives and collaborations, once viewed from the standpoint of what sustains their visibility (Edwards 2003 and Vergès 2003: 241).⁹

A major challenge in this regard is to theorize subjectivity and agency in ways that do not simply replicate the discursive templates of neoliberalism’s ideological charter. This is actually a *set* of challenges—to contemplate agency without automatically individuating subjectivity, glossing action as preference, or analogizing agency to investment or effect. Self-identity, community, and capital are contingently precarious in relation to each other, giving rise to new forms of agency with political import yet not necessarily in political arenas as conventionally understood (see Dávila 2004; J. Goodman 2005; Rouse 2004; Shukla 2003; and contributions to Twine and Blee 2001). Even

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with the state in retreat from the service sector, people continue to address their demands to government—in part because the public (in the sense of community) lacks its former mediating and redressive power (Coutin 2000; Engel and Munger 2002; Gregory 1997; Paley 2001; Rajan 2003: 7). In part, too, popular resistance to state administrations may find expression as direct address (Visweswaran 1994: 15; Briggs 2004). Asking what difference these expressions make to governing or the fate of nations is not always the most relevant question from an ethnographic standpoint; rather, it is how people understand their own relevance to others and how they are prepared to act on their understandings.

For these reasons among others, political agency is scattered by the effects of neoliberal governmentality, and the question of recognizing agency is necessarily less a matter of measuring its efficacy on the machinery of government than on decoding its signs and following their interpretive trajectories. The forms of power under neoliberalism are eclectic and diffuse and leave broad scope for experimentation and improvisation. Accordingly, political agency cannot be defined *a priori* but only in the specifics of its emergence. Indeed, the political valence of presence makes *performance* a potent if ambiguous register of agency (see Jones and Singh 2003: 8). “Politics,” Agamben writes, “is the exhibition of a mediativity: it is the act of making a means visible as such” (Agamben 2000: 116).

Agamben writes further that “the state cannot tolerate in any way . . . that singularities form a community without claiming an identity” (2000: 87), but the graver subversion to the neoliberal state is to claim identity outside of one’s shareholder class—investing across lines set by the market. Indeed, in each of the essays where this issue is most vivid, the individuals in question do not merely refuse the terms and gambits they are offered (in contracts, employment, spectatorship, conversation), but withdraw *into* another sphere, markedly *social* and markedly *not* individualistic: a circle of friends or colleagues, family, social forms of an older decorum. These are forms of sociability that lend substance to what might otherwise appear to be resistance and withdrawal of an empty sort. The book’s central thesis is that such forms of social life—social realms recovered, reanimated or brought into being in the contexts created by neoliberal reform—constitute the limits of neoliberalism. The limits of neoliberalism are accessible primarily through ethnographic inquiry.

In relation to the events of the day, such gestures might seem too slight—too muted—to count as agency amid the forces of history. And yet they are affirmations of subjectivity in a political register—political art, so to speak—directed squarely at the political and cultural economies in which people find themselves in their everyday lives, sometimes finding themselves in danger.¹⁰ As such, they point to the possibility that the future is unbound from the present in a sense different from that which Zygmunt Bauman regrets in *Identity*: “In a world where disengagement is practiced as a common strategy of

the power struggle and self-assertion, there are few if any firm points in life that can be safely predicted to last. The ‘present’ does not therefore bind the ‘future’, and there is nothing in the present that allows us to guess, let alone visualize, the shape of things to come” (Bauman 2004: 68). It is beyond anyone’s scope to determine whether not knowing the shape of things to come is something to lament or perhaps the best we can hope for under present circumstances—or both. As a practical matter of everyday living, the people we meet in these essays are not waiting to be given agency; they are already acting on their judgments of a world we share.

In this context, an ethnographic turn in no way simply (or sentimentally) reinstates local communities as some humane counterweight “against” generalizing erasures of nationalism and globalism, if that is what they are (Rajan 2003: 7; cf. Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 9)—or as shelter from violence and other terrors (see especially Goldstein 2004 and Roitman 2005). Nor does it promise that we will find political power hidden in the transcripts of private life (see Scott 1990). The pervasive condition of neoliberalism is powerlessness, if “power” means having a role (even indirectly) in the deliberative functions of government. Indeed, one striking refrain of the essays is the extent to which people seem to see their own agency in negative terms—as the power to withhold consent, for example, or to perform their resistance, to withdraw some part of their productive energy from what they see as “the system” or, in one instance, just quietly leaving the room, the television deliberately left on, speaking to the abandoned chair. What they withdraw *to* is another question—but even without an answer to that question, it is clear that we need not consent to the notion that the “multitude” is in need of “a political project to bring it into existence” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 212), nor, indeed, leave without a qualifying rejoinder the claim that “bare life [is] the new political subject” (Agamben 1998: 123).

These trajectories take us some constructive distance from the constraints of the new mechanical solidarity toward the “shadow of shadows” where subjectivity and historiography speak each other into being (Edwards 2003). As the pervasive marketization of value confronts individuals with the question of how much to invest (literally or figuratively) at work, home, and leisure, among other settings, they invent their own organic solidarities—though not always in public or in immediately organizational terms. Terror, outrage, comfort, pleasure, boredom, and alienation are among the strains of the new overtures (see also Donzelot 1991; Mains 2007; Yan 2003a and 2003b; Ver Kaaik 2001). The measure of the essays’ value thus does not lie in any single answer to the question of political agency in relation to neoliberal restructurings of governance, nor in the coherence of the normative content of these gestures and expressions. Rather, their value—and the purpose of the volume—is to insist on the question itself so as to clarify its stakes, renew the resources for dialogue between interpretive and political economy approaches to social life,

and advance the scope for ethnographic and comparative inquiry in contemporary life.

In the following essays, then, the interpretive effort is on what Stanley Cavell calls “the public conditions of one’s discourse, the forces it musters against the forces against it, where the victory of discourse consists in bringing those conditions to light” (Cavell 1984: 27). This effort leads away from any notion of a generalized field of political discourse, or, for that matter, neoliberalism “itself.” Rather, it leads critically to specific instances in which people themselves mark their words or gestures as something like signed messages to correspondents, present or implied. In relation to such filings in “the archive of the present” (Mbembe 2004: 18), ethnography offers no “special privileged discourse” but only its own disciplined attempts to sustain a “perpetual undoing” of the limits and burdens of attention and inattention on human life.¹¹

Part I

State Investments in Insecurity

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Chapter 1

Security and the Neoliberal State

British Political Imaginaries After 7/7

KATHLEEN HALL

In his essay on the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, entitled “The Silence of Words: On Terror and War,” Ulrich Beck writes, “the suicide terror attacks, even months after they happened, remain incomprehensible: the difference between war and peace, the military and the police, war and crime, and national and international security are, from within and without, completely annulled” (2003: 256). And in this time of crisis, he goes on to argue, “Neoliberalism clearly stands without any political answers. . . . The terrorist threat renders elementary truths conscious again, truths that have been repressed by the neoliberal victory march: the decoupling of economics from politics is impossible; without the state and public service, there is no security; without taxation, there is no state; without taxation, there is no education, no affordable healthcare and no social security; without taxation, there is no democracy; without the public sphere, democracy and civil society, there is no legitimacy; without legitimacy, there is, in turn, no security” (2003: 263). In our post-9/11 world, he asks, has the triumph of economy been relegated to history? “Has the apparently inexorable victory parade of neoliberalism suddenly been halted?” And in the midst of this uncertainty, “is the primacy of politics being rediscovered?” (2003: 262).

In considering the implications of terrorism for neoliberalism, and, more particularly, for politics, it is important, of course, to first define how neoliberalism is implicated in responses to terrorism. In my contribution to this volume, I will take up that dual question, considering the implications of terrorism and, more precisely, the figure of the terrorist, for the British neoliberal state and for politics in the public sphere.

In the United Kingdom, as elsewhere, neoliberalism entered a second phase in the 1990s, moving beyond earlier emphases on privatization and deregulation, or the rolling back of the state and the surrender of politics to the forces of the market. In the programs associated with New Labour’s Third Way, or “neoliberalism with a human face” (Arestis and Sawyer 2005: 177),

the neoliberal state became more interventionist, committed to a “roll out” of new policies and approaches to governance (Munck 2005: 63). In the mid-1990s, “risk management” became a central organizing framework for governance in the United Kingdom as well as in varying forms in states across the world (Power 2004). The privileging of security in the British government’s response to the threat of terrorism is informed by this model of the purportedly ideology-free and pragmatic role of that state as risk manager. In the first section of this essay, I consider how what Michael Power (2004) refers to as the “risk management of everything” underlies government efforts to enact a state of exception as a necessary response to the risk of terror. I then turn to consider how the discursive production of the figure of the Islamic terrorist, first as foreigner and then—following the bombings in London on July 7, 2005 (referred to as 7/7)—as British citizen, was deployed rhetorically in discourse that has served both to depoliticize as well as to (re)politicize risk management and a state of exception in the United Kingdom.

The Risk Management State

Many argue that the past thirty years have witnessed “the end of the social”—the eclipsing of what for decades has been an inevitable horizon for political thought and action (Baudrillard 1983).¹ The end of the social has corresponded to the return of the market and to a reworking of relations between government and capitalist markets. From New Zealand to Japan, states have implemented new styles of governance marked by a transformation in “ethos from one of bureaucracy to one of business, from one of planning to one of competition, from one dictated by the logics of the system to one dictated by the logics of the market and the demands of customers” (N. Rose 1999: 150).² Yet, the embrace of free-market principles does not reflect a return to *laissez-faire* liberalism; for the role of the neoliberal state is not simply to *free* the market from social and political constraints, but rather to *enable* the market to work more effectively. The political imaginary of the *social state* has been usurped by the notion of the *enabling state* (N. Rose 1999: 142). Instead of providing for the public’s needs “from the cradle to the grave,” the state’s role in the era of advanced liberalism is to enable citizen-consumers to take responsibility for their own well-being (N. Rose 1999: 141–42).

In the mid-1990s, risk emerged as a key organizing concept of both private- and public-sector management. Organizations from hospitals to schools to the highest levels of state government, as Power has described it, were “invaded to varying degrees by ideas about risk and its management” (2004: 9).

Risk management is now at the centre stage of public service delivery and is a model of organization in its own right. . . . This phenomenal expansion of the risk industry reflects a number of different but convergent pressures for change in organizational practices for dealing with uncertainty. There has been a fusion of ideas about orga-

nizational governance and corporate responsibility. New models of regulation are in vogue. . . . Scandals and crises of the past ten years have also been catalysts for the emergence of a conception of risk management with wide scope, unifying traditionally separate areas, such as health and safety, insurance and project management under a single model, but also absorbing new objects of concern. Even concepts of national security and ideas of “preventative” military action are being thought of within the conceptual architecture of risk management. (Power 2004: 10, 13)

The British government’s response to the horrific attacks on 9/11 to a large extent adopted this language and logic of risk management. What was referred to as the war on terror has been conceived in relation to risk—as a security problem. The politics surrounding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the wartime national state of exception have all to some extent been rhetorically depoliticized and legitimated in the name of risk. As Rita Abrahamsen argues, “securitization tends to encourage policy responses formulated along the axis of ‘threat-vulnerability-defense,’ where the imperative concern is to provide a distance—or even to eliminate—the perceived threat” (2005: 61; see also Huysmans 1998). When triggered by the threat of an enemy, security discourse invokes an “us against them” dichotomy (Abrahamsen 2005:60). In this way, securitization involves the identification of a community with the expectation of future hostility or violence, and, as such, integrates a society politically on the basis of perceived risk or threat (Huysmans 1998: 577).

The Anti-Politics of Security

The risk management state, post-9/11 in the United Kingdom and around the globe, has evolved into the national security state. This has hardly seemed to herald the halt or even the hesitation of the parade of neoliberalism, though it certainly, as Beck argues, has “exposed neoliberalism’s shortcomings as a solution to the world’s conflicts” (2002: 47). Rather, the anti-politics instantiated in the principles of political neutrality have been central to neoliberal paradigms of managerial governance and seem now to be reinforced by what Kanishka Jayasuriya has called the “new ‘anti-politics’ of ‘security.’” As he writes, “The dramatic events of September 11, 2001, have ramifications for the nature of global governance as well as the institutions of liberal democracy. The most serious danger these events pose is their potential to usher in, under the appealing cloak of ‘security,’ a debilitating form of ‘anti politics’ that marginalises the constructive . . . conflicts that animate the public sphere in liberal politics” (n.d.: 1).

Yet can we conclude that security, as Giorgio Agamben argues, has “become the basic principle of state activity . . . [and] the sole criteri[on] of political legitimation” (2001: 1; see also 2005)? As a form of “anti-politics,” has this logic of security succeeded in depoliticizing the public sphere? What I consider in this essay is how the political has reentered debates about secu-

rity exactly through the uncertainty of state claims to legitimate violence in the face of terrorism. Efforts to give meaning to “acts of terror” are complicated inherently by the political nature of definitions of what forms of violence should count as “terrorist.” For this reason, modern states during the past century have continuously struggled to achieve international consensus on ways to define terrorism.³

As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have argued (2004), the difficulty in defining terrorism has been further exacerbated by broader changes in the way in which legitimate violence is conceived. Historically, the modern nation-state’s monopoly of legitimate violence has been a central pillar of state sovereignty. But in the second half of the twentieth century several developments internationally have come to seriously undermine mechanisms that have legitimized state violence, developments such as the rise of international law and international treaties, nuclear proliferation agreements, the growing centrality of human rights discourse, as well as the military interventions and legal actions enacted on this basis. In the current “global state of war,” moreover, we have witnessed a further decline in historical sovereignty of the modern nation-state and its corresponding monopoly of the use of legitimate violence. “If the violence wielded by the nation-state is no longer considered legitimate *a priori*, based on its own legal structures,” Hardt and Negri ask, “then how is violence legitimated today?” “The difficulty of constructing a stable and coherent definition of terrorism,” they conclude, “is intimately linked to the problem of establishing an adequate notion of legitimate violence” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 25–27).

In the face of this uncertainty surrounding definitions of terrorism and the legitimacy of violence, political claims have increasingly been couched in the rhetoric of morality and values. Yet the debates that have ensued have given expression to a plurality of moral frameworks and judgments associated with what have often been conflicting political positions and corresponding vantage points. In the midst of such uncertainty, in the context of contestations over legitimacy, it has become difficult to establish any one stance from which successfully to depoliticize the exception of state security.

Political contests over definitions of terrorism and moral claims concerning the legitimacy of violence have taken different forms in the United Kingdom as constructions of the figure of the Islamist terrorist have shifted from foreigner to citizen and, with increasing antiwar sentiment, from enemy to victim. What has emerged are coexisting incommensurate political horizons in relation to which moral claims have been made in debates about the legitimacy of state security policies as well as state-sponsored war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Figuring the Terrorist

On July 7, 2005, four bomb attacks struck London's public transport system. At 8:50 A.M., during the height of the morning rush hour, three bombs exploded on three different London underground trains within fifty seconds of the other. At 9:47 A.M. a fourth bomb exploded on a bus in Tavistock Square. In addition to the bombers, fifty-six people lost their lives and seven hundred others were injured.

In the aftermath of the terrible violence of 7/7, the question of how British citizens could become *terrorists*, choosing to inflict violence on fellow citizens, became a powerful object of thought, moral reflection, policy analysis, as well as political spin. The question, "How should we respond to terror"—hardly surprisingly—evoked intense and heated debate. The British public sphere became the site for this moral and political reflection, and responses were articulated in media reports, Internet blogs and forums, not-for-profit organization press releases and documents, government and judicial debates, as well as, in the end, additional antiterrorism legislation. Efforts to explain the violence involved a struggle over the terms for public moral reasoning—to establish or invoke a moral basis for making judgments about and informing decisions concerning how to respond to now past as well as future violence. Discourse about violence and terrorism has gained its moral currency in relation to the political conflicts indexed in explaining the potential causes of these violent acts. In other words, public reasoning concerning terrorism in Britain has been interpreted in context, as it has been located discursively in divergent political fields. What has emerged is a fragmented language for addressing a political situation that cannot be adequately comprehended from any single moral or political stance. But at the center of the government's response have been efforts to legislate what from the human rights law perspective have been increasingly exceptionalist state security policies and procedures.

Legislating the Security State

It is important to note that terrorism as well as antiterrorism legislation is not new to the United Kingdom. During "the troubles," which began in Northern Ireland in 1969, those on both sides, loyalists and republicans alike, used violence as a political tactic. But it was the IRA bombing campaigns of the early 1970s that prompted the enactment of a first antiterrorist act in 1974. The act was rewritten in 1978, 1984, and again in 1989, granting emergency *temporary* powers, which could be renewed yearly.

In the aftermath of 9/11 the British government was not alone in turning again to the law and to executive security measures to address the risk of future terrorist violence. Since 9/11, the British government has enacted security measures that have allowed executive curtailment, or derogation in re-

sponse to the state of emergency, of certain civil liberties protected by human rights law. The Anti-terrorism, Crime, and Security Act (passed on December 14, 2001), the Prevention of Terrorism Act (enacted on March 11, 2005), and the Terrorist Act of 2006 (granted royal assent on March 30, 2006) were each crafted in the midst of intense controversy over whether indeed derogation is warranted. At the center of these debates is a dilemma that has long plagued liberal democratic governments in times of war and crisis, namely whether and how a *trade-off* between national security and human rights or civil liberties should be justified.

The Anti-terrorism, Crime, and Security Act 2001 included executive security measures that directly contravened the existing U.K. Human Rights Act 1998, which itself had incorporated the European Convention of Human Rights into domestic law. These statutes protect the right of asylum seekers not to be extricated to places in which they would themselves face the threat of torture or other forms of violence. The government sought ways around this by invoking a state of emergency and a derogation order. On November 11, 2001, then Secretary of State for the Home Department David Blunkett made the Derogation Order and the next day it was laid before Parliament. The order states that a “public emergency” exists in the United Kingdom, one that warrants derogation of civil liberties.

On November 10, 2001, President Bush, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly, pronounced, “We unite in opposing *all* terrorists” (Freeman 2005: 44). The British Home Office introduced the new Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill that same week. The new threat was perceived to be coming from outside the nation, and, hence, public protection involved securing boundaries and extraditing suspected terrorists. As illustrated in the following passage quoted from the Human Rights Act 1998 (Designated Derogation) Order 2001 that preceded the passage of the bill, the risk to security in the 2001 legislation is associated with “international terrorists” or “foreigners” who, it is argued, should be extricated from the nation. Islamic (implied but not stated) terrorism was something that came from outside the boundaries of the nation, and, hence, the public could be protected by securing boundaries and excluding those assumed to be associated with the threat.

The terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11th September 2001 resulted in several thousand deaths, including many British victims and others from 70 different countries. In its resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), the United Nations Security Council recognized the attacks as a threat to international peace and security.

The threat from international terrorism is a continuing one. In its resolution 1373 (2001), the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, required all States to take measures to prevent the commission of terrorist attacks, including by denying safe haven to those who finance, plan, support or commit terrorist attacks.

There exists a terrorist threat to the United Kingdom from persons suspected of

involvement in international terrorism. In particular, there are foreign nationals present in the United Kingdom who are suspected of being concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of international terrorism, of being members of organizations or groups which are so concerned or of having links with members of such organizations or groups, and who are a threat to the national security of the United Kingdom. (Human Rights Act 1998 [Designated Derogation] Order 2001)

As Home Secretary David Blunkett explained to the Commons when first introducing the government's counterterrorism plans in October 2001,

I think that we all accept that there is a compelling need for more effective powers to exclude and remove suspected terrorists from our country. We rightly pride ourselves on the safe haven that we offer to those genuinely fleeing terror. But our moral obligation and love of freedom does not extend to offering hospitality to terrorists. That is why, both in the emergency terrorism Bill and in a separate extradition measure, I will ensure that we have robust and streamlined procedures.

I believe that it will be possible to achieve these changes without substantial alteration to the Human Rights Act 1998. Nevertheless, it may well be necessary, using article 15, to derogate from article 5 of the European convention. That would allow the detention of foreign nationals whom we intend to remove from the country, and who are considered a threat to national security. This would occur in circumstances falling outside those permitted by article 5 of the European convention on human rights, but within the scope of article 1f of the 1951 refugee convention.

I am also looking to take power to deny substantive asylum claims to those who are suspected of terrorist associations, and to streamline the existing judicial review procedures while retaining the right of appeal. Appropriate safeguards would apply to any such derogation. (United Kingdom House of Commons Debates 2001–2002: col. 924)

Arguments for enhancing executive emergency powers in antiterrorism legislation pre-7/7 invoked representations of terrorists as “foreign” and “international” and depicted the “national emergency” in relation to the global “war on terror.” But the suicide bombings carried out by four British citizens in London on July 7, 2005, demanded that attention shift from the security risk of foreign terrorists to how to come to terms with “homegrown jihadis.” What led to their actions? And how then should the government respond? In the sections that follow, I consider how the figure of the “British Islamic terrorist” was represented in discourse about the violence that has circulated publicly in the aftermath of 7/7. These characterizations and the explanations for violence that they suggest bring into relief the incommensurability among the moral stances that coexisted and provided rhetorical support for quite distinctive responses to the risk of future violence as well as openings for political action.

The Islamic Extremist as Evil

In the days following the horrific suicide bombings in the London transport system, Prime Minister Tony Blair blamed an “evil ideology” for the attacks.

He called upon the British people—particularly *mainstream* British Muslims—to confront the “perverted and poisonous” doctrines of extremism, to “pull up this evil ideology by its roots” (White, Travis, and Campbell 2005). In a speech at a Labour Party policy forum, Blair argued that the strike “was not an aberrant act. It was not random. It was not a product of particular local circumstances in West Yorkshire (where the bombers had resided). Senseless though any such horrible murder is, it was not without sense for its organizers. It had a purpose. It was done according to a plan. It was meant. And what we are confronting here is an evil ideology” (CNN 2005).

The framing of the citizen terrorist as an extremist reinforced a moral platform and political rationale for security measures he then proposed, measures that directly targeted Muslim extremists, and called for making it an offense to glorify or incite terrorist acts. On July 13 Blair announced a four-point plan to tackle the crisis, which included:

- New laws to outlaw the “encouragement” and “instigation” of terrorism.
- Fresh moves to stop extremists entering the UK and stronger powers to deport them.
- Help to the Muslim community to fight hate preachers in their midst.
- A worldwide effort to boost moderate Islam. (Ball 2006)

At a press conference on August 5, Blair announced that “the rules of the game have changed,” then introduced an expanded twelve-point plan, which Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty, the National Council for Civil Liberties, referred to as “a triumph of rhetoric over reason.” The plan set out a number of proposals that once again situated policing or security measures as the central strategy for “fighting terror.” While many of the proposals have since been diluted or abandoned, some, such as the offense of “glorifying terrorism” and the extension of the pre-charge detention period for terrorist suspects became heated foci of debate in deliberations over the new terrorism act, which was finally passed in March 2006 (Grice and Morris 2006).

Invoking Politics

Shortly after the bombings, the prime minister reached out to Muslim leaders to assist the government in developing strategies to address Islamic extremism. On July 19 Blair hosted a summit with twenty-five Muslim community leaders. Following the meeting he informed reporters that there was a “very strong desire from right across the Muslim community to be united not just in condemnation of the terrible terrorist attacks here in London, but also to confront and deal head on with extremism.” What was needed was the “right machinery” for going into communities and engaging young people who may be vulnerable to extremist ideas. Those attending, he said, supported the idea

of a task force of “people who are going to be supported by the rest of us but [are] from the community, able to talk to the Muslim community and confront this evil ideology, take it on and defeat it by the force of reason” (M. Oliver 2005).

Seven Muslim working groups were set up to provide advice to senior officials and ministers about “how Muslim communities and the Government can further work in partnership to prevent extremism, and to reduce disaffection and radicalization within Muslim communities across Britain” (Communities and Local Government 2005: 97). The groups focused on seven themes. In addition to “tackling extremism and radicalization,” these included engaging with young people, supporting regional and local initiatives, engaging with Muslim women, imams training and the role of mosques, security and policing, and education. After six weeks of consultation, a final report was submitted in November 2005. Their recommendations reinstate the political ambiguity concerning definitions of terrorism into the debate about security. Challenging the new terror law, the report concluded that creating a criminal offense of “glorifying terrorism” could stifle “legitimate support for self-determination struggles around the world.”

The Foreign Office is working on a database of foreign “extremists” and the Home Office a “list” of “specific extremist websites, bookshops, centres, networks and particular organisations of concern” in the UK. It is entirely possible that the resulting “clampdown” will be perceived as censorship of those who might criticise British foreign policy or call for political unity among Muslims. This is disingenuous, to say the least, carrying the dual risk of “radicalisation” and driving the “extremists” further underground. A recent report from the Metropolitan Police Authority stated that the current stop and search practice has created deeper racial tensions and severed valuable sources of community information and criminal intelligence. Rather than extend the period of detention of innocent people, the Police should concentrate on improving their intelligence whose failures have led to huge resentment on the part of the Muslim community. (Communities and Local Government 2005: 77–78)

Their plan to tackle extremism shifted attention away from the influence of an “evil ideology” to the role of “inherent injustices” in British foreign policy, which, the report argues, is contributing to triggering “radical impulses” among British Muslims. “British foreign policy—especially in the Middle East—cannot be left unconsidered as a factor in the motivations of criminal radical extremists. We believe it is a key contributory factor” (Communities and Local Government 2005: 90).

Yet, the working groups were not the first to suggest this connection to the prime minister.⁴ In April 2004, a similar argument was stated in the *Draft Report on Young Muslims and Extremism*, prepared for the prime minister by the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office. The draft report, leaked to the public in the days following 7/7, drew from survey data,

published material, as well as opinions provided by Muslim consultants, to identify several factors that might attract some British Muslim youth to extremism and violence. Central among these were the British government's foreign policies.

It seems that a particularly strong cause of disillusionment amongst Muslims, including young Muslims, is a perceived "double standard" in the foreign policy of Western governments (and often those of Muslim governments), in particular Britain and the U.S. This is particularly significant in terms of the concept of the "Ummah," i.e., that Believers are one "nation." This seems to have gained a significant prominence in how some Muslims view HMG's [Her Majesty's Government's] policies towards Muslim countries.

Perceived Western bias in Israel's favour over the Israel/Palestinian conflict is a key long-term grievance of the international Muslim community, which probably influences British Muslims.

This perception seems to have become more acute post 9/11. The perception is that "passive oppression," as demonstrated in British foreign policy, e.g., non-action on Kashmir and Chechnya, has given way to "active oppression"—the war on terror, and in Iraq and Afghanistan are all seen by a section of British Muslims as having been acts against Islam.

This disillusionment may contribute to a sense of helplessness with regard to the situation of Muslims in the world, with a lack of any tangible "pressure valves," in order to vent frustrations, anger or dissent.

Hence this may lead to a desire for a simple "Islamic" solution to the perceived oppression/problems faced by the "Ummah"—Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir and Afghanistan. (United Kingdom 2004)

Arguments associating the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the London bombings have circulated widely in the United Kingdom. In fact, some of the relatives of those who died in the bombings boycotted the multifaith service of remembrance held at St. Paul's Cathedral on November 1 due to their anger toward the British government. Sean Cassidy, a father of a young man killed in the Russell Square bomb, told the *Guardian*, "As far as I am concerned there would be no memorial service if it wasn't for the war in Iraq. . . . I never thought of not going because I want to speak to Mr. Blair to have a little chat about the war. I am not sure what the protocol will be but I would like to speak to him. Everyone knows the war made us more vulnerable to attack, but Mr. Blair won't say it. There are some families who say they aren't going because they are angry at the lack of support from the government. I am still very angry, it just doesn't go away, it just comes to you every couple of hours. You just can't get away from it" (Laville 2005).

Some commentators, like London Mayor Ken Livingstone, situated the suicide bombings in the context of a much longer history of British-American involvement in the Middle East. In an interview on BBC Radio 4's *Today* program, Livingstone was asked what he thought had motivated the bombers. He stated emphatically that he had no sympathy with the bombers and opposed all violence, but continued,

I think you've just had 80 years of western intervention into predominantly Arab lands because of the western need for oil. We've propped up unsavory governments, we've overthrown ones we didn't consider sympathetic. And I think the particular problem we have at the moment is that in the 1980s . . . the Americans recruited and trained Osama Bin Laden, taught him how to kill, to make bombs, and set him off to kill the Russians and drive them out of Afghanistan. They didn't give any thought to the fact that once he'd done that he might turn on his creators. . . . If at the end of the First World War we had done what we promised the Arabs, which was to let them be free and have their own governments, and kept out of Arab affairs, and just bought their oil, rather than feeling we had to control the flow of oil, I suspect this wouldn't have arisen. (BBC News 2005)

Protecting Human Rights and Civil Liberties

Legitimacy in the modern nation-state has, as Jean and John Comaroff put it, "always been erected on a scaffolding of legalities" (2006: 22), or, quoting Hobbes, laws have provided the "walls of government and nations" (Hobbes 1995: 109; quoted in Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 22). In the risk management state, political and moral ambiguities, such as those surrounding definitions of terrorism and legitimate violence, continue to be addressed through the vehicle of the law (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2006).⁵ What exist as political issues mapped across incommensurate political landscapes have come to be negotiated in quite literal terms as issues of legal definition. One primary example of this is the government's effort to review the definition of terrorism within the United Kingdom's terrorism legislation. Lord Carlile, who in the autumn of 2001 was appointed independent reviewer of terrorism legislation by the government, conducted a series of town meeting-type public consultations, advertised under the title, "Defining Terrorism –We'd Like Your Views," as part of his official review into the definition of terrorism. Lord Carlile produced a fifty-two-page report, published in March 2007, which in the end concluded,

The definition included in what became the *Terrorism Act 2000* was debated at length in Parliament. Lord Lloyd himself said of it: "We must obviously do our best with the definition. However, having spent many hours looking at many different definitions, I can only agree with what was said by both the noble Lord, Lord Goodhart, and the noble Lord, Lord Cope; namely, that there are great difficulties in finding a satisfactory definition. Indeed, I was unable to do so and I suspect that none of us will succeed. As I say, we must do our best but I hope we will not spend too much time on the definition." I am entirely in agreement with that comment. Hard as I have striven, and as many definitions as I have read, I have failed to conclude that there is one that I could regard as the paradigm. Unsurprisingly, I have been unable to achieve what was not achieved by Lord Lloyd—perhaps because it is not possible to do so. This report will not offer major new statutory language. However, I hope that the unbiased reader will accept that it produces remarks and recommendations capable of maintaining a proper balance between the exigencies presented by the types of terrorism evident globally at present, and the need to sustain a fair system of law founded on undiluted democratic values. (Carlile 2007: 4)

Given the difficulties in establishing a paradigmatic statutory definition of terrorism, the law has typically been assessed in relation to the implications of terrorist prevention strategies for human rights and civil liberties. International human rights legislation has been brought to bear in both assessments of and challenges to different components of various versions of the U.K. terrorism legislation (see Greenhouse 2005b; Wilson 2005). The greatest controversies, perhaps, have surrounded two clauses in particular, the offense to encourage terrorism, or the criminalization of the “glorification of terrorism,” and the progressive increase in the length of the pre-charge detention period for holding suspects.

The Terrorism Act of 2006 (which builds on prior terrorism acts and received royal assent on March 20, 2006) makes it

a criminal offence to commit:

- Acts Preparatory to Terrorism: This aims to capture those planning serious acts of terrorism.
- Encouragement to Terrorism: This makes it a criminal offence to directly or indirectly incite or encourage others to commit acts of terrorism. This will include the glorification of terrorism, where this may be understood as encouraging the emulation of terrorism.
- Dissemination of Terrorist Publications: This will cover the sale, loan, or other dissemination of terrorist publications. This will include those publications that encourage terrorism, and those that provide assistance to terrorists.
- Terrorist training offences: This makes sure that anyone who gives or receives training in terrorist techniques can be prosecuted. The Act also criminalises attendance at a place of terrorist training.

The Act also makes amendments to existing legislation, including:

- Introducing warrants to enable the police to search any property owned or controlled by a terrorist suspect
- Extending terrorism stop and search powers to cover bays and estuaries
- Extending police powers to detain suspects after arrest for up to twenty-eight days (though periods of more than two days must be approved by a judicial authority)
- Improv[ing] search powers at ports
- Increas[ing] flexibility of the proscription regime, including the power to proscribe groups that glorify terrorism. (Home Office 2006)

The ambiguity in defining terrorism remains embedded in this legislation, and the political implications are quite obvious and have been debated extensively. As stated in a Human Rights Watch report,

The proposed new offence of “encouraging terrorism” at best duplicates existing criminal offences that prohibit incitement of terrorism or other acts of violence. But its scope is both ill-defined, particularly in relation to “glorification,” and overly broad—it uses a definition of terrorism that extends well beyond the conventional understanding of the term. As a result, it is likely to prove inconsistent with international standards

guaranteeing free expression. Despite assurances from the government, it also remains unclear whether people who are unaware that their words are likely to incite violence can be held criminally liable. The new offence is likely to have a chilling effect on free expression in the classroom, the newsroom, and the mosque. (HRW 2005)

Debates in the House of Commons over the necessary period for the pre-trial detention of terror suspects within what became the Terrorism Act of 2006, while couched ironically in the rhetoric of political neutrality, took a particularly significant political turn. On November 9, 2005, headlines in the British papers read, “Blair Defeated Over Terror Laws.” Tony Blair had suffered his first House of Commons defeat as prime minister over his proposal to allow police to detain terror suspects for up to ninety days without charge.

The prime minister’s central claim was that the police required a ninety-day detention to fulfill their duty to protect the citizenry from risk. His arguments were met with calls from the benches that Britain was becoming a police state.

Prime Minister: Let me emphasize again to the House: this proposal did not originate with the Government; it originated with the police and those responsible for anti-terrorist operations in our country. If I may quote from those responsible for conducting those operations, I will do so. The chief constable of Manchester, for example, said: “The reality of the terrorism threat that we currently face is so horrendous in terms of the implications that we are having to intervene far earlier in the investigation than we ever would have during IRA campaigns . . . because with mass casualty terrorism we cannot afford to take any chances.” Andy Hayman, who is the senior police officer charged with leading anti-terrorist operations in this country, said: “We are not looking for legislation to hold people for up to three months simply because it is an easy option. It is absolutely vital. To prevent further attacks we must have it.”

That is the police saying to us that they need these powers to prevent terrorism in this country. In the last week, we have learned that, since 7 July, two further terrorist plots have been foiled in this country. Yesterday, Australia announced—*[Interruption.]* Well, perhaps those who foiled the plots might have their advice taken a little more seriously. Secondly—*[Interruption.]* Did the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mr. Walker) just say, “A police state”?

Mr. Charles Walker (Broxbourne) (Con): We are not a police state.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mr. Walker) must not shout at the Prime Minister, and Government Back-Bench Members must not shout at the Leader of the Opposition.

Prime Minister: We are not living in a police state, but we are living in a country that faces a real and serious threat of terrorism—terrorism that wants to destroy our way of life, terrorism that wants to inflict casualties on us without limit—and when those charged with protecting our country provide, as they have, a compelling case for action, I know what my duty is: my duty is to support them, and so is the duty, in my view, of every Member. (United Kingdom House of Commons Debates 2005–2006: col. 297)

In this debate, the rhetoric of moral duty and right action was not to win out. Michael Howard, the leader of the opposition, countered with a request

for *evidence* to prove that police claims were actually true. Their claims, he concluded, needed to be “tested.” Let me repeat,” he said,

that we all accept that we face a new threat of terrorism and that we all want to take effective action against that threat. Let me remind the Prime Minister of what he said in the past in relation to anti-terrorism issues. He said: “The view of the police must be taken into account, but . . . the objections received from a very broad range of opinion on these proposals should be properly tested.”—[*Official Report*, March 9, 1994; vol. 239, c. 302–3.] And what we seek to do—this ought to be capable of cool and rational debate—is to test the extent to which the 90-day proposal can be justified. So let me ask the Prime Minister this specific question: can he identify a single case in which it has taken the police ninety days after arresting a suspect to find evidence sufficient to charge that person with a terrorist offence? (United Kingdom House of Commons Debates 2005–2006: cols. 297–98)

Risk, in other words, indeed should be managed, but only with strategies shown to actually “work”—those that were “evidence-based.” The utilitarian reason inherent in neoliberal management strategies more generally was introduced as a way to determine the legitimacy of state security measures. To this, Blair concluded,

The right hon. and learned Gentleman asked why ninety days—it is for the very reasons that the police have given. That is the right period to allow them to conduct their operations and investigations properly. . . . I am afraid that in the end he and his hon. Friends must decide whether on this particular issue they are going to back the police and those charged with fighting terrorism in our country, who tell us—in my view, rightly—that they need this power to make our country safe. . . . The House of Lords will have to make a decision. All of us have to make that decision. . . . Whichever it is, sometimes it is better to lose and do the right thing than to win and do the wrong thing. (United Kingdom House of Commons Debates 2005–2006: cols. 300, 302)

Blair’s effort to “do the right thing” and extend to ninety days the time police can hold terror suspects without charge was defeated by a vote of 291 for the amendment and 322 voting against. That same day, a “rebel Labour amendment” was passed increasing the detention period to twenty-eight days (Tempest 2005).⁶

Conclusion

The paradigm of security and risk continues to be the dominant response to the fear and threat of terror. As Agamben has written, “Today we are facing extreme and most dangerous developments of this paradigm of security. In the course of a gradual neutralization of politics and the progressive surrender of traditional tasks of the state, security imposes itself as the basic principle of state activity” (2001: 1). Yet, in the British public sphere, this dominant security paradigm coexists with other discordant discourses. For while some reinscribe the political into debates about the “right” and “reasonable” re-

sponse to violence and the risk of future violence, others call for justifying security measures on the basis of a “politically neutral” managerial rationale supported by evidence of “what works.” This ensemble of discursive practices brings the British Islamic terrorist into what Michel Foucault (1984b) has called “the play of true and false,” constituting it as an object of moral, legal, instrumental, and, ultimately, political reflection, reflection that, as I have argued, produces the terrorist as subject in relation to quite distinctive moral and political landscapes. The problematization (Foucault 1984a), in other words, is itself an opening, a site from which are emerging political imaginaries that are destabilizing any taken-for-granted “rightness” of the securitization response to violence and terror and configuring fields of possible action.

Chapter 2

The War on Terror and the Paradox of Sovereignty

Declining States and States of Exception

JOSEBA ZULAIKA

If you are an anthropologist working at the periphery of a European nation-state, say in the Catalan or the Basque region of Spain, you are confronted from the outset with the massive presence of American neoliberal hegemony. In the cultural order, for example, take the flashy and much-celebrated Guggenheim Bilbao Museum. You will discover that it is a franchised satellite of the New York museum, established in Bilbao after the city paid a \$20 million fee for the brand name and surrendered control over its programmatic decisions to New York. This museum has been the main cultural and urban renovation event of the Basque region, the emblem of a new postindustrial tourism-oriented economy. Even if Bilbao pays every expense to the last penny, each of its programs, exhibits, and art purchases is decided and administered directly from Manhattan (see Zulaika 2005).

Or, in the political order, take the issue of the Basque armed group ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, “Basque Country and Freedom”) and its nationalist violence, a topic that regularly and infamously places the Basques in the news of world hotspots; after 9/11 it has all become international terrorism and, thus, an immediate target of the U.S.-led “war on terror” from its earliest days. On the merits of his fight against ETA’s terrorism, the Spanish prime minister José María Aznar could join President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair at the summit held in the Azores that preceded the declaration of the war in Iraq. If previously ETA had operated under the scope of the Spanish state, its activities were now part of the global war on terrorism in the company of Al Qaeda.

But, even more than in the cultural or political orders, the U.S. hegemony can be felt in the interdependent monetary and financial systems across the Atlantic. In the remotest provinces of the neoliberal empire, including the Basque Country and Catalonia, news of Wall Street and its impact on Eu-

ropean markets regularly makes the front page in the local papers. The dramatic structural supremacy of the United States over Europe in international economic relations, technology, and finance is widely accepted as fact. The United States supports its massive deficit by absorbing more than 60 percent of the world's net capital flows, thus creating capital through credit rather than accumulation, and making Wall Street its center. By essentially taxing the resources of the holders of U.S. debt, U.S. structural power appears to transform indebtedness into an advantage. Such an advantage regarding capital flows allows the United States to finance a defense budget that is double that of all the European countries together. There is a history, beginning in the 1970s, of Europe's vulnerability to U.S. monetary unilateralism—the major reason behind the 1992 Maastricht treaty and the creation of the European Monetary Union.

The striking imbalance in technological innovation between the United States and Europe was made obvious during the 1999 U.S. intervention in the Kosovo war after the breakup of former Yugoslavia. All of this is well known to any European, as is the subordinate status of the euro to the dollar. Everyone knows that oil exports, affecting Europe's gas prices as much as those in the United States, are paid in dollars. The dollar accounts for most of the international bank loans and foreign exchange reserves, and since the early 1990s the trend toward dollarization has steadily increased in Latin America and elsewhere.

Spain Amid the Declining European States

The hegemonic neoliberal project is associated mostly with “the market.” The other pillar is “the state,” which has the role of protecting society from the inequalities of the neoliberal market. Yet in practice the state plays a crucial role in the construction of the capitalist market and in the mediation of political conflicts. It has become commonplace to claim that the globalization of core economic activities, as well as media and electronic communication, have drastically undermined the instrumental capacity of the nation-state. If the U.S. federal government is largely dependent on global capital markets and foreign borrowing, this is even more the case for Spain or Germany. Prominent analysts such as Manuel Castells think that the conditions are ripe for an international fiscal crisis of the nation-state, including the wealthiest ones. He concludes that “the nation-state is increasingly powerless in controlling monetary policy, deciding its budget, organizing production and trade, collecting corporate taxes, and fulfilling its commitments to provide social benefits, unless it assures competitiveness of its economy in the global context. It has lost most of its sovereign economic power, although it still has some regulatory capacity and relative control over its subjects” (Castells 2004: 316).

No single government, not even the United States, can control the global financial markets. Between 1980 and 1993, the U.S. government's net foreign borrowing grew 456 percent. As a result, even the most self-sufficient economy of the world has seen its degree of economic freedom drastically reduced since the 1990s. Add to this the multilateral military dependence among nation-states resulting from the dissolution of the cold war military blocs, the impact of new technologies, and the awareness of the global nature of threats to human security. U.S. unilateralism, increasingly at odds in these contexts with the international system, is the exception.

The weakening of the European nation-state and the loss of competitiveness of European firms vis-à-vis those of the United States and Japan gave impetus to the project of Europeanization. It is important to note, however, that the goal was, rather than a supranational federal entity, the reconstruction of state power at a European level by means of which nation-states could keep some degree of sovereignty. The crisis of the European Union following the failure of France and Holland to ratify its constitution, underlines the reluctance of the citizenry to accept full integration in a supranational state. In brief, while the sharing of sovereignty in economic, environmental, and security matters by the nation-states is an irreversible trend, at the same time those same nation-states are asserting themselves as the basic components of a new superstate network.

These contradictions inherent in the nation-state's loss and recuperation of sovereign power directly affect the political aspirations of substate peripheral nationalisms such as those of the Catalans and the Basques. In the "state of autonomous communities" that emerged in post-Franco Spain, Catalonia and the Basque Country were treated as but two more "autonomies" equal to other provinces such as Santander or Murcia. But Catalonia and the Basque Country had long historical records as distinctive countries with strong linguistic and cultural identities, whereas Santander and Murcia have no comparable nationalist histories or similar aspirations to self-government. Spain has succeeded in keeping Catalonia and the Basque Country under military and political control, but the historical idea of Spain as a true nation-state has been too weak to impose its language fully or to dissolve Catalan and Basque identities.

Presently, after thirty years of autonomy, both Catalonia and the Basque Country are involved in the difficult political process of reforming their statutes of autonomy. Their requests for more self-government are met with suspicion by the rest of Spain's autonomous communities. In the case of the Basques, their president proposed in 2003 a new statute that included, ominously, "the right of the Basques to decide their future." In theory, democracy affirms the right of a political community to decide what type of association it should have with another sovereign power. In practice, the Spanish Constitu-

tion does not recognize the right of self-determination for any of its historical nationalities. It makes sovereignty unambiguously the prerogative of the Spanish nation alone.

Let us review this paradox of Spanish sovereignty as instituted in the constitution approved on December 29, 1978. The state of autonomies was largely a response to the centrifugal demands of the Catalans and the Basques, and to a lesser degree of the Galicians. Their nationalist aspirations to obtain a distinct political existence have marked the political life of Spain throughout the twentieth century. The First Republic failed to create a federal state in 1871; the Second Republic granted political autonomies in 1931, which were enjoyed by Catalonia since 1932 and by the Basque Country since 1936 (the Galician autonomy was drafted but never adopted by a Spanish parliament already immersed in the civil war). In the wake of the civil war, dictator Francisco Franco imposed a monolithic vision of a centralized Spain without autonomies until 1975, when the old debates over national and territorial identities became once again the challenge for the new democracy. Democratization required recognition of individual and territorial liberties and had to take into account historical nationalities. Thus the constitution tried to integrate peripheral regions politically while affirming their historical and cultural particularities. In order to consolidate democracy after almost four decades of Francoism, the framers of the Spanish Constitution had to consent to the existence of territorial autonomies. "This explains the paradox of a process which sought to appease centre-periphery tensions, but deferred a specific settlement of the most acute territorially based demands, those of the Basque Country and Catalonia" (Comas 2003: 39).

The constitutional compromise had to reconcile those in favor of a federal state and those in favor of a unitary state. This resulted in constitutional ambiguities, the consequences of which are at the center of political debate in the Spain of 2005; these concern the demands from several Spanish autonomies, notably the Basques and the Catalans, for renewing their statutes. Article 2 is at the source of those ambiguities: "The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards; it recognizes and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed, and solidarity amongst them all." It is thus a legally unitary but politically composite state. It affirms the "unity of the Spanish Nation," yet it affirms the existence of other "nationalities" by way of recognizing, for Basques, the existence of the "Historic Rights." In short, the proponents of the unitary nation-state as well as those of a plurinational federal state can draw their arguments from the same text. Their contest can be resolved only as a matter of political interpretation. In the debate on the reform of the Catalan statute of autonomy that took place in November 2005, the acrimonious debate between Popular Party (opposed to reform on constitutional

grounds) and the other parties (favoring it on constitutional grounds) exemplifies the political stakes in questions of constitutional purview.

Paradoxical Sovereignty

But who is sovereign? Is sovereignty indivisible? “National sovereignty is vested in the Spanish people, from whom emanates the powers of the State,” says article 1.2. The unity of the state expresses the unity of the sovereignty, which is based solely in the Spanish people. A different approach by the Catalans and the Basques during the debate of the constitution upheld the view that the sovereignty of the Spanish people was a voluntary but incomplete transfer of originary sovereign powers from the different peoples of Spain. They also called for the notion of “shared sovereignty” within a federal system. This federal approach to sovereignty was defeated in the legislative debate leading to the constitution. Similarly, the amendment by the Basques and Catalans to introduce the right for self-determination was defeated.

Spain is not the only European state in which sovereignty plays out in a double scenario. On the one hand, states must affirm and share their sovereign power with substate regions; on the other hand, substantial functions of sovereignty must be delegated by the states to the supranational European Union. Threatened by both supra- and infrastate levels, the European nation-states have reacted by entrenching themselves behind an outdated notion of sovereignty. The consequences are dire for the viability of the European Union, as brought to light by the failure of the European Constitution.

The defeat of the shared sovereignty model is ironic, given the European Union’s sovereignty principles. In the case of the states that have joined the European Union, the initial question is which one holds sovereignty, the states or the Union. The answer is obvious: the states possess the formal sovereignty as they have ceded their powers to the Union under the condition that they retain the capacity to revoke their permanence in it. Article 1.60.1 reads: “Every member State has the power to decide, in agreement with its constitutional norms, to withdraw from the Union.” The states retain their formal sovereignty while transferring to the Union the exercise of sovereignty in certain matters (Bengoetxea 2005: chap. 4).

Thus emerges the question of whether in fact the European Union is in itself sovereign. Does it have any sovereignty above and beyond the sovereignty of the states that it comprises? Do the European Union’s declarations, for example the acceptance of the creation of new states after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, have the international recognition of a sovereign power? This would require that the states that form such a union have ceded their sovereignties to it. The truth is that the states have not formally surrendered their sovereignties and, therefore, the European Union is not a sovereign power. The result is what Joxerramon Bengoetxea has labeled “The

Peter Pan Europe,” an infant unwilling to grow and share the adults’ burdens of responsibility.

As pointed out earlier, the instrumental capacities for a nation-state to control its formerly core functions (military, economy, finance, information, media, and so on) have been drastically curtailed. Yet, the nation-state still holds to the concept of sovereignty. In the case of Europe, its loss of international competitiveness forces its nations into a supranational union, but only as a sort of cartel, not as a true sovereign union, because the states are unwilling to cede their precious sovereignty. It is their last fetish—the belief that they hold something so invulnerable to history and politics and the market that they will always enjoy its mystical power. It is Brussels that will decide how many boats can go fishing or how many olive trees are planted or how many gas stations installed in a given country, yet the entrenched state, faced with its loss of actual power, holds to the fiction and the magic of its own sovereignty, and while doing so, as illustrated by the Peter Pan Europe, is unable to confront the realities of the contemporary world and loses ground.

The failure of the European Constitution only underscores the fact that the Union as such does not actually have a juridical personality. The European Parliament does not have a normative power. Hence the crucial relevance of a constitution that would grant the European Union a political legitimacy, a constituting democratic body side by side with the legitimacy of the states. This would create a truly *supranational* organization, not merely an *intergovernmental* one. Out of the many European institutions, only the European Commission, the Justice Court, and the European Court for Human Rights are truly supranational.

The unwillingness of the nation-states to relinquish their sovereignties into a truly federal union is mirrored domestically by their unwillingness to conceive of the various nationalities and regions internal to their jurisdictions in a federal manner. The states will join the supranational union only by holding firmly onto their sovereign power to opt out of it if they see fit. But any recognition that the various nationalities and regions that made up the nation-state could have similar claims to an original sovereignty is disregarded as premodern obsolescence (Herrero de Miñón 1998). The entrenched nation-state, a shadow of its former power but invested with the magic of sovereignty, claims to be the power behind the curtains that seemingly can control the course of history.

Unitary Versus Federal Models

The paradox of Spanish sovereignty spreads to the historical nationalities that reside currently within the umbrella of the Spanish nation-state. As mentioned earlier, even the 1978 constitution allows for both a federal reading (Spain as a plurinational entity) or a unitary reading (Spain as a single indivisible nation-

state). What claims to sovereign self-rule can peoples such as the Catalans and the Basques make? The Spanish Constitution recognizes that Catalonia and the Basque Country are political communities. A commonplace axiom of democracy is that the future of a political community should be decided by the will of its people. It might be obvious for Catalan and Basque nationalists that they are “nations” in charge of their destiny in just this sense, but this is precisely what is anathema to the Spanish constitutional order. For example, Basque president Juan José Ibarretxe’s announced “plan” for reforming the statute of autonomy created a storm in Spanish politics (during the years 2003–2005) over its clause affirming the Basques’ right to decide their future. According to some opinion polls, over 70 percent of the Basques favor some kind of referendum to verify the will of the population (only about 30 percent of the population wants independence from Spain). The situation in Catalonia is similar. About 35 percent are in favor of independence, an option that extends throughout the various segments of the population.

Not surprisingly, the very structure of the Spanish state of autonomies is presently in full debate. As Juan Luis Cebrián, the first editor in chief of the most influential Spanish newspaper *El País*, wrote on May 11, 2005, on the occasion of the first anniversary of Socialist Prime Minister José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero’s post-Aznar Spain, “the great unfinished business of Rodríguez Zapatero . . . is the reorganization of what is called the territorial question and that makes reference rather to the reform of the structure of the State” (Cebrián 2005: 9). And he went on to propose without hesitation a federal Spain:

The increasing weakness of the nation-State, overwhelmed by globalization, has led to expand the political spaces, a phenomenon whose most obvious example is the European Union. Inside it live side-by-side great and small states, poor and rich ones, with sometimes immense differences among themselves. The citizens of all those countries enjoy, in principle, the same individual liberties. But their identities, and their needs, are different. The only way to solve the apparent contradiction between the freedom they are entitled to as citizens and the recognition of the right to self-government they claim as countries resides in the most successful experiment among those carried out by the political practice throughout history: the federal method. (Cebrián 2005: 9)

The application of similar models to Europe—where, despite the present problems, Cebrián sees federalism as unavoidable—and to Spain’s multinational reality appears to be the logical solution to the present Catalan and Basque conundrums.

Cebrián’s poignant article was preceded by a series of reports by *El País* about “the waning state.” Contrary to the perception of those who view the state as a giant, the fact is that, except for Social Security funds, the Spanish state’s treasury administers only 19 percent of public resources, the rest falling under the control of the autonomous governments. In the years between 1995 and 1999 alone, the Spanish state lost 60 percent of its employees, while

the autonomous administrations have increased their personnel by about 68 percent. The number of workers employed by the central state is comparable to the number found in an autonomous government such as that of Andalusia. Since Franco's regime was known for its centralization, now anything in the opposite direction is considered more democratic and efficient. This has raised the alarm with respect to the question of how to stop such centrifugal logic. The insatiable demand for more and more powers coming from the peripheral nationalities has brought accusations of permanent blackmail. The fact is that the central state still has the opportunity to politically maneuver and please the autonomies that it considers *friends*. Thus Andalusia, governed by the Socialists, had to wait until Aznar left office and the Socialist Zapatero took power in order to receive the 3.7 billion euros it was owed by the central government. Such hard bargaining between the state and the autonomies is becoming one more aspect of the autonomy puzzle, giving rise to fears that the very survival of the state of autonomies engineered by the post-Franco Spanish democracy is at stake.

But it is the Catalan and the Basque cases that pose the real problem to a diminished state. The Basque provinces, exercising a remarkably stately prerogative, already enjoy a treasury of their own. They hold a so-called economic concert with the state by which they collect the taxes in their territories and pay the state a 6.24 percent quota. But the negotiations, reworked every five years, are always fraught with public posturing and suspense, as the state representatives allege that the quota does not cover all the expenses of the state in the autonomous territory. The "sovereign" state is caught in a bind in which the "victimized" Basques will always want more, to the point that they do not contribute their share to the interregional solidarity while getting an advantageous deal with the State; yet revoking this economic concert is a political taboo because, heir to a long history of "foral" or traditional institutions, it is the key constitutional link between the state and the Basques. Central governments have been respectful of the quota with the hope, dashed lately, that the Basques would get used to accepting the Spanish state's constitutional frame. In the meantime the Catalans, who have a net fiscal deficit (i.e., payments to the central state exceed contributions in the form of public works) of over 9 percent of their national product (Puigercos 2005: 14) are no longer willing to continue the status quo and would like something similar to the terms enjoyed by the Basques. This is the crux of the reform of the new Catalan statute, which has opened up the Pandora's box of Spanish disaggregating tendencies.

Confronted with such centrifugal tendencies at home, and having surrendered most of its financial, economic, military, and environmental functions to the European Union, the Spanish state faces the question of the necessity of its own preservation. This situation has led sectors of the Spanish Socialist Party and commentators such as Cebrián to advocate a new transformation

of the state by espousing a federal model that would incorporate the sovereign aspirations of peripheral nationalities. The central government is caught in a bind: confronted with demands for greater autonomy, its negative response fosters increased secessionist attitudes. Presently there is a Socialist government in Catalonia, one that has historically favored a federal Spanish state. The government in Madrid is also Socialist, which has prompted some commentators to mention the possibility that transforming Spain into a federal state is not altogether out of the question. The failure to resolve in a satisfactory way the demands for greater self-government by the Catalans and the Basques may open the doors for a disintegration of the Spanish state. This possibility is already being trumpeted by Aznar's right-wing party, the only defender of the present political status quo in Catalonia or the Basque Country. As Jordi Argelaguet concludes, "Whatever the outcome of this debate, Catalonia is now at a crossroads. The Catalan people have two alternative paths: to remain within a reformed Spanish state or to become an independent nation state. Neither path has a clear outcome and each encompasses several projects within it. The only certainty is that the question is being posed and must be answered" (Argelaguet 2003: 125). The same applies to the Basque Country.

Sovereignty in a Post-Sovereign World

Basque nationalism, like all nationalisms, is guided by the premise that the homeland has an inherent right, granted by history and political will, to sovereignty. The irony is that the globalized world has become, in Michael Keating's word, "post-sovereign" (2001). The final paradox of sovereignty in these post-sovereign times is that, in order to have it, you must give it up by surrendering to the interdependencies of new economic and political structures. This is the bitter lesson the European states are forced to accept—in order to keep a modicum of sovereignty. In other words, to avoid falling into complete international irrelevance, those formerly colonial powers are geared into giving up most of what they understood in the past as their sovereign prerogatives to a supranational union. Similarly, Spain is being forced to recognize the various nations within its territory or else risk the danger that its historically crafted multinational state disintegrate into chaos. (A key debate in the Spanish parliament during the process of approval of the Catalan statute had to do with whether Catalonia was a "nation" or a "nationality"; the parliament decided that only Spain can consider itself a "nation.")

But the same applies to the "old nations" of Catalonia and the Basque Country: they too will have to come to the realization that we live in a post-sovereign world. For them to be demanding a Weberian nineteenth-century nation-state is by now anachronistic. In July 2005, the historic Basque nationalist party PNV, which has governed the Basque Country during the post-Franco democratic period, called for a programmatic agenda for the

twenty-first century of “shared sovereignty.” The attitude of “sharing” sovereignty is supported by the realization that not all nations require a state, nor that the state is the only source of law, nor that real power is vested in sovereignty (Bengoetxea 2005: 117). Michael Keating has studied the cases of Catalonia, Quebec, and Scotland, and their commitment to forms of self-government different from statehood, to conclude that, rather than a return to “tribalism,” they are “harbingers of a new form of politics.” After “asking whether these new movements can be accommodated within the political order, by means short of independent statehood, while respecting the principles of liberal democracy,” his conclusion is “a cautious ‘yes, but.’ Nations do not have to become states to achieve self-government” (Keating 2001: vi).

Keating’s notion of “post-sovereignty,” although far from claiming that states have faded away or that the nationality question has been resolved, is an attempt to map the new realities of the nation-state and the new possibilities of nationalist self-affirmation in an increasingly globalized order. His argument is that we are moving from a world of sovereign nation-states to a post-sovereign situation in which supranational, subnational, and transnational systems drastically condition the instrumental capacity of the states. A key analytical proposition of his is that “Sovereignty is not an absolute concept, or vested exclusively in states. Rather there can be multiple sites of sovereignty or ‘normative order’ below and above the state” (Keating 2001: viii).

Such deconstruction of sovereignty is possible only within a thought that has first been freed from that “intellectual incubus” which is “the myth of the nation-state” and which for two hundred years has monopolized our understanding of constitutionalism, leading to questionable assumptions such as the identification of self-determination with the constitution of a separate state. Catalans and Basques recognize for the most part that they belong to two old nations who have the right to decide their future, including the right for self-determination, but only a minority wants to create a separate nation-state out of their countries. The linking of nationality and statehood, so prevalent in the modernist imagination, is losing its grip with the demystification of the state, as illustrated by the European context. It is similarly problematic to link democracy with a consolidated nation-state as a precondition.

The historical Basque and Catalan nationalist parties have favored a European federation in which sovereignty would be shared with the other Spanish nationalities. The Spanish Constitution would allow for an asymmetrical reading in which their distinct status would be respected, including their own fiscal regime (which the Basques already have) and their own system of courts, as well as a high degree of symbolic recognition of plurinationality. These parties have historically favored a “Europe of the Peoples,” which implies the disappearance of the states, a clearly post-sovereign position. There is, however, another dynamic in the Basque case between the moderate nationalists and the political branch of ETA, the independentist Batasuna. They

both compete for the nationalist vote and, at the end of the 1990s, there was an entente between them to force ETA to stop violence and initiate a new post-statute-of-autonomy period, including recognition of the right to self-determination. Such a radicalization of moderate Basque nationalists gave grounds for the Spanish constitutionalist parties to accuse them of conniving with ETA's terrorism. This further radicalized moderate nationalists into lining up behind President Ibarretxe's 2003 proposal to reform the statute with his "sovereignist" plan including the right of Basques to decide their future in a referendum.

In short, the doctrine of sovereignty "is a complex and, in some respects, internally contradictory set of propositions, many of which turn out to be either tautological or impracticable" (Keating 2001:12). Its close connections to definitions of the state, self-determination, and nationalism present further problems. Some of the issues concern the distinction between its formal and substantive forms, as well as between external and internal sovereignty.

Various interpretations may lead toward the view of a unitary authority or else the view of federal systems of authority that are neither fully sovereign nor superior to each other. The current challenge posed by peripheral nationalities to the central Spanish state is the replacement of its unitary interpretation with a federal one. The linking of intrinsic sovereignty to the state is in itself problematic. The state is after all a historic reality, vulnerable to the contingencies and hegemonic changes inherent to political organizations. If sovereignty were to be equated with the state, then it would be the product of modernity. Relative sovereignty appears as a contradiction, but absolute sovereignty is contradicted by everything we observe in world politics. If sovereignty is *de facto* power, it is emptied of normative content. It should be possible to locate sovereignty in organizations other than the state. The very right to decide the future—self-determination—might in fact be seen as the radical sovereign act, rather than the linkage between sovereignty and the state.

Terrorism and the State of Exception

"I will build Spain against ETA," proclaimed Aznar. This was in a nutshell the logic of Aznar's rancid Spanish nationalist program. It gave him great electoral results in the year 2000, when he earned a majority in the Spanish parliament, but it also doomed him in March of 2004, four days after the Madrid attacks by Islamic terrorists, which, all evidence to the contrary, his government adamantly blamed on ETA. Basque terrorism provided Spanish nationalism with a political purpose, the high moral ground and the international support for fighting the prevalent contemporary evil. It was in this context that the unlikely alliance between Bush and Aznar was shaped. Even if Al Qaeda and ETA are two organizations worlds apart in every sense (ideology, culture, politics, geography, nationalism, history), the common ex-

ternal phantom of the Other “terrorist” created for them both a marriage of convenience.

A similar logic obtains in the United States after 9/11 when terrorism becomes the very *thing* of international and national politics. Even if we maintain a radical skepticism toward the Bush administration’s “war on terror,” still we have to take seriously the worldwide escalation of insurgent and suicidal violence. We must begin by asking ourselves whether the enthronement of terrorism as undisputed worldwide obsession and threat, as well as the “war on terror” as the single-minded task of American global policy, are the unavoidable offshoot of 9/11. To the conundrum of sovereignty faced by the states in this period of globalization, as illustrated by Europeanization, we have to add now the “terrorist” turn taken by the international conflicts during the present U.S.-led order and take into account the extent to which the recent counterterrorism agenda is part and parcel of the neoliberal hegemonic project.

Terrorism discourse illustrates best the paradox of sovereignty, which, in Agamben’s formulation, “consists in the fact that the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order” (Agamben 1998:15). Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib are instances of the sovereign power’s capacity to be simultaneously inside and outside of the law. What best typifies the structure of the paradox is that exception becomes the norm. The exception reveals starkly who has the sovereign power to decide and impose the legal boundaries, when the rules are applicable, and when they are suspended.

What is at stake in the capacity to establish a state of exception is the very possibility of state authority. The recourse to exception seeks to exercise control over an exteriority, which gets included and thereby co-opted by exclusion. Counterterrorism discourse illustrates well this “taking of the outside” through the logic of exception. The empire must control the powers that oppose both its sovereign and indirect rule; hence the implied independence of terrorist exceptionality is intolerable. It is no longer enough or even possible to leave terrorists alone. Thus, paradoxically, terrorist outcasts are excluded from the “civilized” world, while simultaneously coming under the purview of imperial control because of the tabooed character of their exceptionality. ETA terrorists might have been in the past a sideshow due to their menace to a nation that was not one of Washington’s key allies, but not any more. When the Madrid attacks of March 11, 2004, become a decisive episode in the terrorist offensive, and the prospect that ETA might have been the perpetrator, self-servingly proclaimed by Aznar’s government on the eve of a Spanish election, becomes a real possibility, suddenly the puny ETA becomes a player in world events on the stage set by Washington’s “war on terror.”

At the same time, once declared by the Empire, the war on terror both subsumes and transcends all national sovereignties, perhaps expressed best in President Bush’s famous message to the world community that “you are either with us or with the terrorists.” The world is thereby divided into “civilized”

and “rogue” states. Indeed, in an age in which the sovereignty of individual states is already being undermined by globalization, the war on terror may ultimately prove to be the most intrusive and corrosive—whether in the guise of military and counterterrorism “advisers,” the construction of military bases, or “preemptive strikes.” The enemy is no longer a specific nation-state or an armed group but, rather, the tabooed abstraction of a global threat (Hardt and Negri 2004: 14).

In the post-9/11 world, news that was previously unimaginable has become normal. Images of torture in Abu Ghraib shocked the world. Once hundreds of prisoners held at Guantánamo were defined as “unlawful combatants” and, therefore, “terrorists,” there was no need for a fact-finding process and they could be held indefinitely in legal limbo. The Geneva Conventions for the proper treatment of prisoners were rejected by White House lawyers as “obsolete” and “quaint” (Lewis 2004: 34). Counterterrorism was also adduced by the Bush administration to argue that his presidential powers were unconstrained by law, a posture that led to the deaths of dozens of prisoners at the hands of their interrogators. The Iraq war and occupation, deemed illegal by many nations, as well as the doctrine of military preemption, equally onerous to the international community, are further examples of unprecedented responses because of the perceived uniqueness of the dangers of terrorism. Welcome to the promised land of terrorism (Žizek 2001). This is the realm in which government after government invokes counterterrorism as the irresistible rationale for abrogating the civil liberties of the citizenry (Lewis 2004: 34). Only counterterrorism discourse could have legitimated the practical suspension of habeas corpus in the United States.

The USA PATRIOT Act has provided the government with an extraordinary expansion of surveillance authority that goes beyond the investigation of terrorism and which applies to any federal criminal investigation. One of its key premises is guilt by association. Ethnic profiling has thus been implemented once again; of the more than 1,200 people detained by the U.S. government in connection with its investigation of the 9/11 attacks almost all are Muslims or Arabs. Only one of them has been indicted for involvement in a crime. Ethnic thinking was also the reaction of the Spanish government of José María Aznar when he self-servingly blamed the Basque terrorist group ETA for the 2004 March massacre in Madrid—which cost him the election.

States of Exception and Sovereignty

The final result of such states of exception has been described by Agamben as one in which “it is impossible to distinguish transgression of the law from the execution of the law, such that what violates a rule and what conforms to it coincide without any reminder” (Agamben 1998: 57). Guantánamo becomes both the ultimate bastion of civilization against terrorism and also the

ultimate repudiation of domestic and international law. Similarly in Spain, Basque political parties and newspapers have been banned during the Aznar government under the dubious claims, later disproved by the courts, that they were linked to terrorist networks. A shocking case of such exceptionality took place when, in 2003, the director of the only Basque newspaper was arrested and tortured before being released without charges. What from the traditional perspectives of civil rights advocates is the most flagrant abuse of the rule of law the discourse of terrorism will make compatible with the law of the land and will allow to be treated by public opinion and the mainstream media as completely “normal.” The anomaly can only be explained in terms of counterterrorism discourse’s fundamental premises. The unthinkable, without being thought through, has become normalized because of the premises, fears, and self-fulfilling prophecies of a new culture of counterterrorism that is radically subversive to what any proponent of Western values and liberal democracy might believe to be the rule of law.

In the end we are confronted with the intimate links between neoliberalism and the war on terror. The Iraqi tragedy is the compelling case of the moment. Had it not been for the oil reserves, deemed of strategic national interest for the United States, no Gulf War would have taken place, nor would the war on terror have converged there. There are other telling instances of such links between neoliberalism and the political efficacy of a war on terror. In Mexico, for example, the neoliberal rhetoric of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) claimed that true “sovereignty” would be achieved economically through a world-competitive private sector—discrediting the need for a strong state (which could only undermine the neoliberal order). The NAFTA myth of economic sovereignty reversed the nineteenth-century revolutionary myth about national independence from foreign domination. But “NAFTA challenges not only the myths but also the legalities of Mexican state sovereignty. In doing so, it undermines key aspects of Mexico’s legal-political order without proposing an alternative transnational legal-political order. So in many respects, NAFTA represents for Mexico a new invitation to legal and political limbo” (Erfani 1995: 174). No social charter and hardly any provision for Mexico to catch up with the other two economies—conditions necessary for a meaningful Mexican equality as a trading partner—were included in NAFTA. By privileging transnational private sector interests over Mexican national interests in the areas of trade, commerce, investment, and property rights, neoliberalism’s promise of *economic sovereignty* has in fact paradoxically undermined Mexican sovereignty. The first day that NAFTA went into effect, poor people in Chiapas launched the armed Zapatista rebellion. *Both realities, neoliberalism and the armed rebellion, appear to belong to the same field.*

From the perspective of cultural analysis, one question that should concern us is the extent to which we attribute sovereignty’s *exceptionality* to semantic definitions and self-serving political expediency. Throughout its recent his-

tory, many instances from the Reagan and Clinton administrations can be adduced to show that counterterrorism played into such a dynamic. Accusing the Other of terrorist lawlessness allows one to dispense with the rule of international law. The premises of counterterrorism recall ancient notions regarding barbarians as less than human and, therefore, outside the realm of law and morality. In our liberal democracies the tension between civilization and barbarism is now configured by terrorism, and its main expression has to do with issues of legality. Spain is one of several countries in which tolerance toward torture has been justified under the banner of counterterrorism. Thus the constitution of 1978 has been faulted by Antonio Vercher for its “substantial amendments . . . in terrorist cases” to the rules for detention and trial, which are “very much like the antiterrorist decrees and laws that had been inherited from the Franco years” (Vercher 1992: 283). Vercher documents notorious cases of victims tortured to death in democratic Spain, for “judicial control of prolonged detention in terrorist cases is far from effective” (Vercher 1992: 229). It was in Spain that the government of Felipe González was implicated in the creation of the state terrorist group GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación)—a shadowy death squad that crossed the border to kill twenty-seven Spanish Basques exiled in southern France. The subsequent trials were a factor in the electoral defeat of the González’s government in 1996 and nearly resulted in an indictment of the president himself (Woodward 2001).

Conclusion

In the end, as Begoña Aretxaga notes, “A war against Terrorism . . . mirrors the state of exception characteristic of insurgent violence, and in doing so reproduces it ad infinitum. The question remains: What politics might be involved in this state of alert as normal state? Would this possible scenario of competing (and mutually constituting) terror signify the end of politics as we know it?” (Aretxaga 2005: 277). It is such a redefinition of politics as we know it that is at stake in the war on terror. It is the pivotal role of the terrorist enemy that is striking in the U.S.-led neoliberal order. As argued by Carl Schmitt, the figure of the enemy is central to the very notion of politics to the point that if you lose the enemy you lose politics itself (2006). This was Nietzsche’s crime when he proclaimed, “Enemies, there is no enemy!” His overturning of values called perversely for making opposites turn into each other. In Jacques Derrida’s commentary, losing the enemy is a crime in the order of the political or against the political itself (Derrida 1997). Schmitt further established a crucial distinction between enmity and hostility; the political antithesis of friendship is not enmity but hostility, he argued. The fetish of the enemy as the other side of the fetish of sovereignty. The enemy is something “public,” and opposition to the enemy has nothing to do with private sentiments of hatred. The first inversion implied by the *amicus/hostis* opposition is that even the friend or the

neighbor can be an enemy. This is the case in situations such as Iraq at present. In the Christian tradition, the maxim “love your enemy” didn’t mean love your political enemy; during the Crusades, Europeans had to fight Islam to the end in the name of universal Christianity while loving the Muslims as neighbors. This is also the predicament in which Bush’s war on terror put us all. We are told that this is not a war against Muslims but against terror, yet the hundreds of terrorist suspects, in Guantánamo or in the anonymity of the U.S. prison system, are all Muslims. If the crusades against the Muslims were not any war, but they were combats with the political at stake, such struggle for politics is what we are witnessing in the ongoing war on terror as well. Its inaugural semantic act is the definition of the other as terrorist enemy, which creates its own genre of politics by imposing the definitions, laws, and premises of the counterterrorism discourse. Terrorism provides for us what the Crusades provided for Christian Europe: the excuse for the creation of a political enemy so barbaric that its elimination requires going to war. The war on terror confronts us with vast redefinitions of the very nature of warfare and law—regarding premises such as preemption, for example, to say nothing of the impact on basic laws and civil liberties that affect the entire political domain; this too is a moment for the struggle for politics. Our task as analysts is to show how both sides, the terrorist and the counterterrorist, are not really opposed but reinforce each other, that in the end “they belong to the same field” (Žižek 2001: 46).

When it has become fashionable to talk about “the death of politics,” the neoliberal hegemony forces us to confront the view that what is at stake is the struggle for politics. The hegemonic politics that subordinates democratic policies to market fundamentalism, while turning the democratic state into a national security state under the threat of terrorism, is responsible for the increasing inequalities at home and worldwide. The elimination of critical thinking under the mythology that things cannot be otherwise ends up justifying this return to radical capitalism. The glaring contradictions in the neoliberal hegemony (remember that neoliberal showcase Argentina; or the recent corporate scandals and the bursting of the stock market bubble; and now the failure of Iraq) compel us into refiguring new forms of transnational democratic politics. Dismantling the phantom of the “terrorist” Other as excuse for American exceptionality is one of the tasks that we ethnographers are better equipped to do.

Chapter 3

Liberalism Against Neoliberalism

Resistance to Structural Adjustment and the Fragmentation of the State in Russia and Hungary

KIM LANE SCHEPPELE

For much of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union provided an economic and ideological alternative to capitalism and its liberal foundations. As a result, hard-edged liberalism in the capitalist world was often softened by socialist touches to win the global competition for hearts and minds of the poor. The economic catastrophes of the 1930s had demonstrated to the capitalist countries of the world that they could only assure the stability of both state and economy if they provided for the desperate. As a result, the welfare state emerged first as a pragmatic solution to the problem of system collapse in the face of a communist alternative. It was later rationalized in theoretical terms by the creation of an economic and normative theory that required liberal states to care for the worst off among their populations, a theoretical arc of welfare liberalism that goes roughly from Keynes to Rawls. By the 1980s, just as the Soviet Union and its allied states were themselves realizing that they needed capitalist touches to keep their socialist systems going in the face of global economic pressures, welfare liberalism in capitalist states was under attack from the right, particularly in Britain and the United States.

As this account shows, the framing events for the beginning and end of the compassionate adjustments to liberalism are not to be found in the capitalist states that adopted welfare liberalism themselves. Instead, one can date the start of the period of compassionate liberalism in the Russian Revolution and one can see the end of compassionate liberalism's dominance in the collapse of the Soviet empire. The end of state socialism brought welfare-state liberalism down with it just as the start of state socialism forced liberalism to adjust in the first place. Once there was no real competition in the marketplace of political systems anymore, why should liberalism adjust? And the answer was: liberalism would prefer not to. Since global socialism largely disappeared, liberalism hasn't had to compromise. It has gone "neo."

Neoliberalism is new, of course, only in the sense that “everything old is new again.” With socialism diminished, liberalism could restore something like its pre-socialist mode under the guise of being new. As a result, neoliberalism asserts that states that are soft on socialism must be brought to see a simple truth: coddling their populations with a safety net that ensures a decent life without hard work will simply make them lazy. Desperation breeds the work ethic and more work creates economic growth, which in turn creates a bigger “pie” to share around. Old-fashioned (and now neo-) liberals have reasserted themselves with both intellectual force and institutional power after the collapse of state socialism. As a result, when the post-Soviet states were reconfiguring themselves in the 1990s, neoliberalism was not just an alternative; it was the only game in town.

As one might imagine, however, there is a particular irony in the imposition of neoliberal programs on former socialist states themselves. The sites of former socialism are therefore particularly good places to explore both how neoliberalism worked its way through state institutions to become hegemonic and where forces of resistance gained their strongest toeholds as this process occurred. Until very recently in former Soviet places, neoliberalism was an alien rationale. But neoliberalism managed to enter the ideological field of public values in post-socialist places in a particularly powerful way through the 1990s, inserting itself into the political space primarily through finance ministries staffed by members of neoliberal antisocialist political parties that gained electoral support in the first wave of multiparty elections. At the time of the collapse, much of the former Soviet world was heavily indebted, and neoliberal programs were offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis by the international financial institutions (IFIs) managing that debt. The parliaments of these economically down-and-out states, as a result, had to adopt neoliberal prescriptions. One might have imagined that post-socialist states, more than any others, would have the capacity to resist, but the leveraging of international debt into domestic policy is something few poor states can avoid. As we will see, however, the most powerful sites of resistance to neoliberalism were not outside the state, but rather within it. Constitutional courts, wielding newly written constitutions that included social rights, mobilized to fight back against these neoliberal policies. As a result, neoliberalism split the state. But it was welfare liberalism that triumphed in the end.

Since the transformation of the Soviet sector of the world into sites of neoliberal contestation, I have been doing fieldwork there. From 1994 to 1998, I lived in Budapest and worked as a researcher at the Hungarian Constitutional Court. Since 1998, I have been making extended trips to Russia, culminating in seven months of fieldwork in Moscow in 2003, where I studied the Russian Constitutional Court. In both Russia and in Hungary, I have examined the development of constitutional law through these new courts and have therefore explored the way that a new system of public values has been generated

through the elaboration of law. In Russia and in Hungary, neoliberalism coming in through the finance ministries in the 1990s was countered by welfare liberalism coming in through the constitutional courts. Resistance to neoliberalism, then, had as its primary site not civil society, but the heart of the state itself. In Hungary, but not in Russia, court-based liberalism has significantly moderated the impact of neoliberal reforms. In Russia, but not in Hungary, neoliberalism carried the day—though the courts in Russia did attempt to slow it down. What we can see in examining the battles over neoliberalism in these two countries is the way in which “the state” emerges as not one player in these battles, but as a divided and contested space within which campaigns over the adoption of neoliberal political programs are waged.

Neoliberal Programs in Post-Socialist States

The countries emerging from Soviet control in the late 1980s and early 1990s were urged to change themselves quickly. The advice came both from international organizations and from states that had been anticommunist during the cold war. “Shock therapy” was the prescription on offer, embodied in the slogan that “you cannot cross the river in two leaps.” Shock therapy counseled changing everything about an economy at once, on the jumping-the-river analogy that doing things halfway would result in disaster. States were urged to “liberate” prices in one fell swoop. At the same time, they were supposed to quickly privatize state property (which was, of course, almost all the property there was). Simultaneously, states were supposed to slash taxes, cut public budgets, and generally downsize the state to minimal proportions. Jeffrey Sachs, then of Harvard’s Institute for International Development, led the shock troops of shock therapy. As he defined the program, shock therapy

was based on a few straightforward ideas. First, to eliminate shortages and to allow markets to function, virtually all prices were decontrolled [on one day]. . . . Second, to cut the budget deficit and eliminate hyperinflationary pressures, most subsidies to households (especially food subsidies) and industry were slashed or eliminated entirely at the same date. Overall, budget spending was restrained, through sharp cuts in public investment and subsidies. Monetary policy was also tightened substantially. . . . To establish a free-trade regime, the currency was sharply devalued and made convertible from the start. . . . Existing restrictions on international trade were almost entirely lifted. (Sachs 1993: 48–49)

With this plan, teams of advisers swarmed first over “Central and Eastern Europe” (as the former Soviet satellite states of Europe were known) and then over the former Soviet Union itself chanting the mantra of liberalization, privatization and downsizing the state.

Why would a state agree to put itself through shock therapy? Looking back, it seems clear that some of the leaders of some of the post-Soviet states actually believed this program would work to create a functioning capitalist economy

almost overnight. True believers like Finance Minister Lajos Bokros in Hungary or presidential adviser (and acting prime minister) Yegor Gaidar in Russia clearly thought this was the only way for their states to become “normal countries.”¹ They knew that shock therapy would cause pain in the short run, but they seemed to have genuinely believed that the period of pain would be short and that the long-term benefits would be large, as Western advocates promised.

But even more states in the post-Soviet world followed the neoliberal plan for transition because they had to. As Katherine Verdery (1999) has shown, the collapse of the economies in socialist states was caused in large measure by the accumulation of loans from international financial institutions in late-stage state socialism. Eventually, the mountain of debt became too great for any of these fragile economies to sustain. And so the end of socialism was brought about to a substantial degree by a basic capitalist device: compound interest.

Virtually all of the Soviet-circle states were deeply indebted to international financial institutions at the time socialism ended. But once states were indebted in this way, they were no longer in control of their own fates. Needing new loans simply to have the cash to pay back the old loans, indebted former Soviet states had to borrow at the terms their lenders of last resort established. And one of the conditions of these new loans was shock therapy, sometimes called by the more euphemistic terms “conditionality” and “structural adjustment.”

Russia leapt eagerly into the breach, led by the true believers within its own government with the enthusiastic support of the United States and the international financial community. Poland, the first to attempt to jump the river in one leap, was rewarded by many Western countries with the forgiveness of more than half its foreign debt. Some economists who have analyzed the basis of Polish “success” in the transition wonder whether the shock therapy or the debt forgiveness did more to produce whatever beneficial economic effects could be discerned. Russia, coming later, was not so lucky with debt forgiveness, and, as we will see, it fell far, fast, and deep into new economic trouble.

The other countries of the former Soviet world attempted more gradual transitions, but were pushed hard into going faster. Hungary, already farther along toward privatization and marketization than most of the countries in the region at the time of political liberalization, reformed more slowly after 1989. Other countries that were even slower to embrace the neoliberal program (Romania, Bulgaria) were put on a longer queue for joining the European Union. Lenders of last resort made onerous demands before giving loans; in the end, their threats to withhold much-needed loans altogether pushed reluctant states into compliance.

When it came to neoliberal reform, then, some post-socialist states jumped and some were pushed. But nearly all followed the neoliberal course at first.

Large segments of the population of post-socialist states fell deeply into pov-

erty when their governments cut free from the socialist economic system that had been anchored by the Soviet Union. In Hungary, after-tax real earnings declined every year between 1989 and 1996. At the end of those seven years, the level of average net real earnings for the average Hungarian was 24 percent below what it had been in 1989 (Nagy 2003: 224). While in 1989, the average urban family of four had an income 20 percent above the subsistence rate, by 1993–1994, average income was around subsistence level (Boone, Gomulka, and Layard 1998: 2), which meant that the typical previously comfortable family faced a real economic squeeze. Hungary's gross domestic product dropped by 13 percent between 1989 and 1996 even though Hungary had the benefit of the largest per capita inflow of investment dollars of any of the post-Soviet transitional countries. Then again, it also was one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world at the start of its transformations.

In Russia, the figures for the initial plunge into poverty were even more dramatic because, in addition to the dislocations of breaking free of the socialist economic web, Russia tried drastic reform all at once. Russia's transformation started in 1991 with the unplanned disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had been one integrated economic space, bumping along with one large and bulky economy. When international borders were suddenly superimposed on a common electricity grid, an integrated transportation system, a single system of complex industrial production, and a common financial system, the initial result was a collapse of much of the economic infrastructure. According to World Bank figures, Russian industrial production dropped by 60 percent between 1990 and 1999 (Stiglitz 2002: 143).² In 1989, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, only 2 percent of the population lived below the poverty line. By 1998, fully 23.8 percent of the population lived below the Russian-defined poverty line of \$2 a day, and 40 percent of the population lived on less than \$4 a day (Stiglitz 2002: 153). While a select few Russians got extremely rich during the 1990s, the typical Russian citizen's life savings were wiped out twice in one decade. First, all cash savings—and there were no other forms of savings—were wiped out in the hyperinflation that saw prices rise by the staggering cumulative total of 508,010 percent between 1989 and 1996 (Boone, Gomulka, and Layard 1998: 2). In 1992 alone, inflation was 2,506 percent, followed by 840 percent in 1993 (Ledeneva and Seabright 2000: 93, 105, Table 4.1). Prices had been suddenly “liberalized” (which is to say, allowed to float with market forces) without any buffer for the vast majority of the population who saw their money become worthless as a result. Then, in the large wave of bank failures that resulted from the ruble devaluation in 1998, citizens' uninsured accounts disappeared with the banks. That the economic collapse had a dire effect on the population appears in other statistics. For example, life expectancy for men decreased by nearly a decade, in less than a decade, to 58.6 years—the average level in Russia a century earlier (Burawoy, Krotov, and Lytkina 2000: 44).

In the mid-1990s, the international financial institutions were evidently upset with the fact that state budgets in post-socialist countries continued to grow while the overall economic growth that had been foretold as compensation for the pain that had been inflicted was still elusive. The standard wisdom was that excessive public spending created inflationary pressures that delayed the onset of growth (Fischer, Sahay, and Végh 2004). As a result, the international financial institutions cracked down on post-socialist countries coming up for new loans by demanding an even harsher round of state budget cuts. Social programs were the most heavily targeted, even though the large swaths of the populations of these countries were increasingly desperate as inflation, cuts in the real values of wages and social benefits, and economic restructuring that cost many jobs pulled at those on the lowest rungs of the social ladder with ever-increasing force.

In Hungary, 1995 was the year when the demands of the international financial institutions to cut social spending collided with the refusal of the government to sacrifice the welfare of its population to neoliberalism. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) threatened to close down its offices and move out of the country if the Hungarian government didn't engage neoliberal reforms in a more thoroughgoing way. The Hungarian government, desperate for new loans to stave off state bankruptcy, had to accede to the demands, even though the parliamentary majority had just switched in 1994 to the socialists.

And what did the IMF want? Usually such negotiations are secret, but in Hungary, a confidential letter written during the IMF loan negotiations by Massimo Russo, director of the Europe I department of the IMF, to Lajos Bokros, the neoliberal Hungarian finance minister, was published in the Hungarian press in fall 1995. Russo's conditions for IMF support included "a package of fiscal retrenchment, wage restraint, monetary stringency, social security reform, and structural adjustment [that] will entail some adjustment pains in the short run, but it is the only secure route." Translated, "fiscal retrenchment" meant budget cuts, "wage restraint" meant not allowing salaries to keep pace with inflation, "monetary stringency" meant not printing more money to cover deficits, "social security reform" meant cuts in transfer payments, and "structural adjustment" meant a continued program of state property privatization and price liberalization. The letter went on specifically to indicate that keeping the budget within IMF's targets in particular would require "rigorous action to contain expenditure in a variety of budgetary categories and especially in the social security funds" (Nagy 2003: 52). In short, social welfare payments were very much in the IMF's sights in 1995.

In Russia, too, social welfare payments were a special target of the IMF during these years. While Russia's initial dose of "shock therapy" was softened by targeted subsidies to those made much worse off by the changes in the early 1990s (Wertman 1992: 2), these stopgap measures were also under

clear attack by the mid-1990s. Significantly, the IMF didn't squeeze social benefits until after Russian president Boris Yeltsin's reelection in 1996 showed he could defeat a challenger from the reformed Communist Party. But then the IMF started taking aim at social welfare payments. While it repeated publicly that a social safety net should be maintained, the IMF tied the revenue for such a program to a restructuring of the tax system that shifted taxes from enterprises to individuals. Pensions could still be paid, but retirement ages were to be suddenly raised. Unemployment benefits could still continue, but only if employer subsidies were cut—something that would no doubt increase unemployment. The IMF warned darkly that the hardest part of social welfare reform was still ahead for Russia. As things got steadily worse for the average Russian and much of the economy fell into barter transactions, away from money altogether (S. Clarke 2000: 195), the IMF insisted more forcefully that the state budget remove all transfer payments to the ever-increasing class of the newly poor.

By 1998, when the Russian economy was teetering on the brink of catastrophe, the IMF and Russia reached an agreement about a new loan. A Russian letter to the IMF—published by the IMF as if it reflected ideas of Russia alone—said that the government pledged “a radical tightening of the federal budget, which intends to solve once and for all persistent fiscal imbalances” (Russian Federation 1998). As revealed later in the memo, the Russian government had already “raised the wholesale price of gas for household use” while simultaneously promising to make it easier for electricity, heat, and gas to be cut off to nonpaying customers. This was no small concern for a country largely comprised of territory that is dangerously cold for most of the year, particularly when half of its population at the time was living on less than \$4 per day. In addition, despite the fact that sales taxes are widely accepted as regressive, the government proposed a 5 percent sales tax, which was to be implemented just as energy prices were raised.

On budget cuts, the government led with proposals to restore the solvency of the pension fund through recalculating the levels of pensions and halting the indexing of pensions, except for the smallest ones.³ On the revenue side, the government proposed increasing taxes on working people—on top of the sales tax—to bring more money into the system. In addition, the government pledged to “reduce the overall expenditures of the Social Insurance Fund by 25 percent in 1999.” While sick leave and maternity benefits were to be left untouched in the Social Insurance Fund, all other programs were to be slashed. These other programs included, for example, veterans' benefits, social security for those whose physical or mental disabilities prevented their employment, payments to those who worked for years in the Far North because of the promise of additional compensation, and health benefits to those who were poisoned by Chernobyl. At the same time that payments from this fund were cut by 25 percent, savings in bank accounts disappeared without a

trace and without any promise of repayment because a general bank collapse followed the ruble collapse which itself followed close on the heels of these radical budget cuts. Social insurance, pensions, and other social payments, cut in absolute terms even if the currency had maintained its value, were then paid in radically devalued rubles that lost 60 percent of their value in the first few days of the crisis and “stabilized” in January 1999 at a real effective value 45 percent below that of July 1998 (Stiglitz 2002: 149).

In addition, the 1998–1999 Russian-IMF budget agreement proposed that the central government lean on the regions to repay loans and to cut regional payrolls to levels mandated from the center in order to achieve additional “savings.” (What that would do to the regional budgets, unemployment rates, and the regions’ abilities to pay for social benefits is not evident in the IMF document, but one can guess that the results would not be good for those who lost their jobs in the financially strapped regions as a result of these cuts.) To improve tax collection from citizens, the memorandum outlined plans to issue liens through banks on any (remaining) personal bank accounts. All of this was to occur while “constraints on dissolving labor contracts” were simultaneously being reduced through the proposed new Labor Code. Privatization of state-owned property was to speed up, though few Russians could afford to buy such property under the circumstances. In the proposed budget for 1998–1999, the Russian government also committed itself to spend 164 billion rubles—fully 44 percent of the projected revenue for that year and 36 percent of the total budget—to pay interest on international loans.

The IMF side of these negotiations is always shrouded in secrecy, so one only knows what the IMF was demanding from leaked documents and country-side capitulations framed as voluntary decisions. But from what we can see in both Hungary and Russia, the formula in both places was the same: cut social spending at the very time that privatization eliminates state-sector jobs—and all of that when inflation has destroyed savings, and when large segments of the population have been plunged into poverty or mere subsistence after the economic dislocations of neoliberal policy.

Neoliberalism hit the former Soviet world especially hard.

The Courts Strike Back

Given the severe dislocations caused by neoliberal policy, were there any voices offered in resistance? By and large, open resistance was not common; most post-socialist citizens fended for themselves, as indeed they had already gotten used to doing in the Soviet time when state institutions had failed them frequently as well. There were virtually no mass strikes; communist parties had generally been converted to socialist parties with a liberal face or were weakened (as in Russia) by direct assaults on their resources; civil society generally was undeveloped, and thinner still in the parts of the population that

were hit the hardest by these cuts. Who was left to resist? As it turns out, the leading voice of resistance to the neoliberal programs of the 1990s came from the constitutional courts, which were the only institutions powerful enough to modify these changes.

In actually existing neoliberal reform programs, economic orthodoxy is accompanied by rule-of-law orthodoxy. The rule-of-law orthodoxy generally promotes the view that freedom of contract and protection of property are the core elements of any legal system worthy of support. But the rule-of-law ideology is also quite formalist, holding that following legal rules—*any legal rules*—is better than falling prey to the whims of political discretion. The political reforms of neoliberalism were accompanied by commitments to multiparty democracy, separation of powers, new protections for rights, and new constitutions to consolidate them. The new constitutions of the post-Soviet world, however, included not only the neoliberal rights of property and contract, but also long lists of social rights. While it is often assumed that social rights were a legacy of the Soviet system, many of the social rights in post-Soviet constitutions were in fact put there for the first time and were made less subject to political discretion than they had been in the Soviet time. As a result, social rights and the reduction of political discretion in administering them were both completely new features of the constitutional order, along with liberal rights. And constitutional courts in the region were charged with upholding these new constitutions in the face of severe challenges to the economic well-being of the populations. Many of these courts in fact used their constitutional power and the constitutional language they were called upon to interpret to throw themselves in front of the neoliberal reforms.

When the Hungarian Parliament finally buckled in spring 1995 under IMF pressure and passed a radical austerity program (called the Economic Stabilization Act officially, but nicknamed the “Bokros package” after Hungary’s true-believer finance minister), many of the reforms were immediately appealed in a flood of petitions to the Hungarian Constitutional Court. The law had gone through the parliament with barely a public debate. The law was introduced in March, passed in May, promulgated in June, and harsh cuts in the systems of child support, sick pay, maternity leave, and other social programs were due to take effect on July 1. It was at the Constitutional Court that the Hungarian general public came to have its biggest say. In response to this deluge of petitions, the Hungarian Constitutional Court issued a series of rapid decisions that laid out a vision of social rights and required modification of the austerity program.

The decisions started the day before the cuts were to take effect and continued through the fall of 1995 (Scheppele 2002). In them, the Hungarian Constitutional Court blocked the immediate implementation of many of the cuts by declaring several parts of the Bokros package unconstitutional (starting with AB 43/1995, translated in Sólyom and Brunner 2000: 322).

For example, the Bokros package cut virtually all forms of state payments to individuals—from sick pay and maternity leave to child support, pensions, and labor protections. To analyze the constitutional issues, the Hungarian Constitutional Court defined state transfer payments as broadly falling into the following two categories: (1) payments that came from funds into which individuals were required to pay, which were deemed to create a contract-based social insurance program, and (2) payments that the state gave to individuals without a quid pro quo in order to express a particular solidarity with a disadvantaged group. The first category encompassed pensions, health insurance, and other social benefits for which citizens paid into the social security fund over time. The Hungarian Constitutional Court said that these programs created “acquired rights” or “mandatory insurance” because the right to receive state payment was acquired through prior financial contribution by the recipient into the social insurance fund, as would be true of any other contract for services. In the second category were maternity benefits, child support, and other forms of assistance to particular segments of the population—benefits that did not require prior payment into the social insurance system by the recipient group. The court called these “solidarity programs” because the payments by the government expressed a policy decision that certain groups deserved special support. The social welfare system in Hungary was, according to the court, a “mixed system,” consisting of both of these elements.

But both elements did not have equal constitutional protections. With pensions and sick pay, individuals had been required to pay into the system and had thereby been prevented from saving money on their own for dire eventualities. As a result, the court said, the state had an obligation to continue payments. By paying into the system, individuals acquired a property right in the future benefits. Because these property rights were “acquired” through the prior conduct of taxpayers, the state was constrained in how it could change the system. These rights potentially could be modified in the public interest, but modifications that threatened the survival of the social security system itself would be subject to constitutional scrutiny. Although the Hungarian Constitutional Court’s previous decisions recognized that no *specific* level of pension or sick pay was guaranteed by the Hungarian Constitution, it still held that elimination of the social security program or the government’s failure to maintain at least a minimal level of social support would violate fundamental rights. In addition, the speed with which these programs were modified violated the principle of legal security—a concept rooted in the Hungarian Constitution’s rule-of-law clause (Republic of Hungary n.d.: art. 2.1). Because Hungarians relied on government sick pay and pensions and therefore had had no opportunity to save and provide these things privately, changes could not be made to the system of benefits without “a period of preparation for the implementation of the new provisions” (Sólyom and Brunner 2000: 545). Benefits falling under the category of social solidarity or welfare payments

received less constitutional protection, according to the court. Because recipients of these benefits had not paid into the system, they did not have acquired rights in the payments that the state had previously provided. These programs could, as a result, be modified subject to certain constitutional constraints that included a guarantee of legal certainty, the preservation of a social minimum and a prohibition on discrimination. Even though the recipients of solidarity assistance did not have a right to continuation of payments indefinitely, according to the Hungarian Constitutional Court, such recipients had generally made important life decisions—such as whether to have children—based on these benefits; they therefore had something like a reliance interest in them. As a result, although these benefits could be modified, they could not be modified overnight. Thus, even though the solidarity programs could be changed more fundamentally than the insurance programs in the long run, neither type of benefit could be changed without satisfactory notice to those who relied on state payments.

Reaction to the decisions was sharply divided. The neoliberals were furious. Throughout the summer of 1995, the intellectual press in Hungary was filled with articles criticizing the court for standing in the way of economic reform. Economist Tamás Bauer, an influential member of the parliamentary majority writing in the leading daily newspaper, took the position that the Hungarian Constitutional Court did not have sufficient economic expertise to make these decisions and that its support for social rights was a policy choice better left to Parliament (Bauer 1995). János Kis, a political philosopher and one of the founders of the liberal Free Democratic Party, a partner in the coalition government, added in another long article that the court had overstepped its authority by trying to write a budget and that no conception of constitutional rights could make resources appear from nowhere (Kis 1995). Hungarian Academy of Sciences corresponding member András Sajó's article in the *East European Constitutional Review* attributed the court decisions to a nostalgic attachment to the communist time and predicted a crisis to come (Sajó 1996).

But the public was thrilled. Five days after the first decision, a national poll found that 89 percent of the public had heard of the decision and that overwhelming majorities—84 percent of those who had voted for the parties in the government and 90 percent of those who had not—believed that the court made the right decision in the austerity program cases (*Magyar Hírlap* 1995).⁴ Some scholars agreed, noting that while the decisions slowed reform and blocked some government plans, they also allowed most reform to proceed once the government agreed to ensure protection of social rights (Dethier and Shapiro 1998: 458–68; Scheppele 2003).

In the end, the disaster that critics of the court predicted did not come to pass. And it was not because the court's decisions were ignored. The government did, in fact, observe the limits that the decisions outlined. In response

to the decisions, the parliament had to slow down implementation of cuts and revise its methods of means testing. But the government was able to enact substantial reforms as long as it maintained a commitment to a social safety net. Although there was much criticism of the new programs all around, it seems that the costs of change were contained without corresponding increases in the poverty rate. In short, the Hungarian Constitutional Court decisions might have been inconvenient for the government and dismaying to IFIs in the short run, but in the end, the government worked within the constraints provided by those decisions and still achieved much of the needed fiscal reform over several years rather than in one giant leap. And the government did this without drastically increasing the poverty rate.

What is the lesson in this? The Hungarian Constitutional Court's defense of social rights in the face of a radical austerity program clearly generated a great deal of anger from politicians who felt betrayed after making hard choices and from intellectuals who were convinced that economic reform could not take place without substantial pain for the population as a whole. But the population as a whole cheered, and not just because their benefits were preserved. Perhaps most important, the decisions provided the government with bargaining power in dealing with IFIs; the government could claim that the Hungarian Constitutional Court's rulings tied its hands with respect to minimal social rights. And, relying on the rule-of-law ideology that was also characteristic of the IFIs, the Hungarian government argued that surely the IMF would not require the government to violate decisions of its own high court, would it? In the end, the Hungarian Constitutional Court allowed the government to defend its own vulnerable populations when negotiating with the IMF.

With the advantage of hindsight, I think it is possible to see how the Hungarian court's defense of social rights at a moment of great crisis in the country's economic well-being kept Hungary on track in both its democratic and economic transitions. Not only did Hungary have a better functioning economy than many countries that made larger cuts in welfare programs early on, it also has sustained less inequality, less desperate poverty, and a stronger and more stable democratic government than many countries in the region.

The Russian story has a similar shape, but with a different outcome. There, the Constitutional Court was at a disadvantage in saying anything particularly strong about social rights during much of the 1990s. Though the court had been set up in 1991, before the new constitution was written, it proved to be too politically aggressive for President Boris Yeltsin's conception of separation of powers (Hausmaninger 1992). As a result, it was closed down in October 1993 at the same time as Yeltsin called out the tanks against the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament (Semler 1993). The Russian court remained shuttered for all of 1994, and opened again with a number of new judges in 1995 (Hausmaninger 1995: 379–80). After its rebirth, the court was

quite timid. During Russia's worst plunges into poverty, the court was either not functioning or not certain that it would be permitted to function.

The court found its voice in social rights matters with a *postanovlenie*—or framework decision—at the very end of 1997.⁵ In decision 20P of December 16, 1997 (*In the Case Concerning Verification of the Constitutionality of the Provisions of the Sixth Paragraph of Point 1 of Article 28 of the Law of the Russian Federation of 19 April 1991 "On Employment of the Population in the Russian Federation" as Amended Through 20 April 1996*) (Russian Constitutional Court 2001), the court considered the constitutionality of a federal law that provided no more than thirty days of unemployment benefits per year to any person, even if he or she remained unemployed for a longer period of time. The petitioner, the дума of the Khabarovsk region, argued that this violated article 39 of the constitution, which guarantees social insurance in the event of unemployment. The court agreed and held that because the state had not provided other means of support for unemployed citizens, a benefit limitation period of thirty days would not guarantee those citizens "material support in the proper measure." The constitution, in the view of the court, required that a subsistence minimum be paid. Moreover, the Russian court reached beyond the facts of the case and proclaimed that state policy must provide a certain subsistence income for everyone.

This decision, coming as it did while negotiations over the IMF loans for 1998 were under way, could have had as large an effect on the Russian government as the Hungarian cases had had on the Hungarian government. However, it does not seem to have registered at all in the memorandum of agreement that the Russian government eventually published on the IMF's Web site in the summer of 1998. In fact, the cuts to social programs were more explicit and deeper than previous agreements had required, and they were combined both with price increases for subsistence goods like utilities and with tax increases. Just as the Russian Constitutional Court was giving the Russian government solid ground to resist the IMF, the Russian government seemed to abandon social rights completely.

Why did the Russian government ignore the life preserver thrown out to it by the court? Unlike in Hungary, which had a socialist government at the time, the Russian government was dominated at this point by the neoliberal economic team surrounding President Boris Yeltsin, a team that was working hand in glove with the IFIs. In fact, many of Yeltsin's closest advisers had gotten suspiciously rich during the fire-sale privatization of state property early in the decade and were clearly in favor of pushing harsher reforms whenever asked. (To his credit, Gaidar seems to have been a true believer who was not motivated by personal gain as much as the others. See Gaidar 2003.) In addition, Yeltsin was a president who governed in general not by law but by decree. During his tenure, very few general statutes were passed to govern the transition. Most of the reforms were accomplished by *ukase*, or executive orders.

Yeltsin clearly had no interest in any version of the rule of law himself. As a result, court decisions meant nothing to him or to his immediate circle, which was instead transfixed by the promises of riches that the reforms provided to them and to their friends.

Given the Hungarian experience, it seems likely that the Russian government could have used the Russian Constitutional Court's framework decision on social rights as leverage against the IMF. The Russian government, however, paid no attention to the decision and did not attempt, as far as one can tell, to use it as a bargaining chip in their negotiations with the IMF. The result was mass impoverishment of the Russian population, widespread cynicism about democratic government, and suspicion of international institutions trying to "help."

State Resistance to State-Supported Neoliberalism

Given our examinations of Russia and Hungary, we can see that the mere presence of court decisions defending social rights do not provide a guarantee that governments will use these decisions to gain leverage when negotiating with the international financial community. The Hungarian socialist-liberal government of 1995, intent on maintaining a social safety net, grabbed the opportunity to use the Hungarian Constitutional Court's decisions to renegotiate the terms of its international loans. The Yeltsin government in Russia, intent on being as aggressively fundamentalist on market reforms as their partners were at the IMF, did not use the Russian Constitutional Court's decision of 1997 to take a stand against the IMF's conditionalities. But constitutional courts led the charge against neoliberal reform in both Russia and Hungary, even though the judges on both courts had been appointed in large measure by the very governments whose policies they challenged in standing up for social rights.

One might imagine that the resistance of judges to the neoliberal reforms might come, as the neoliberal critics of these courts often assume, from old-fashioned socialist thinking in a post-socialist age. In both the Hungarian and Russian constitutions, the social rights clauses interpreted by their respective courts were elaborated and expanded when the new liberal constitutional order set in; they were not mere holdovers from a prior era. In addition, when one looks at the backgrounds of the judges who have taken the lead in these cases and at the ways in which they justify their opinions, it is clear that the judges were adopting liberal rather than socialist values in reaching their conclusions and that they were using *welfare-state liberalism against neoliberalism*.

In the Hungarian case, the major decisions on the Bokros package were coauthored by László Sólyom, the conservative and anticommunist president of the court at that time, and Géza Kilényi, a then-socialist who had worked in the last communist justice ministry. While Sólyom had no sympathies with

the socialist government of the day, he was and is a passionate believer in the rule of law, which in his view requires that every clause of the constitution be enforced. Kílényi had written previous decisions arguing for even broader social protections, but in these decisions, he compromised in favor of grounding them not just in the social rights provisions of the constitution, but also in the rule-of-law clause. The result was a set of decisions that emphasized a social minimum, but struck down most of the Bokros package provisions on the basis of their speed, lack of notice, and draconian quality—liberal values all.

In the Russian case, the judges were all former communists, but those who have been most involved defining the direction in the social rights cases have also been among the most supportive of the economic transitions overall. The reporting judge on decision 20P of 1997 was Olga Khokryakova, who had been a specialist in Soviet labor law but who had been one of the authors of the early reforms of the labor code after the Soviet Union broke up in 1991. Once the Russian government got into the habit of ignoring decisions of the Constitutional Court directly interpreting the social rights provisions, social rights issues have been brought into other areas of law, most notably tax decisions, in which the Russian authorities have been constrained from collecting personal taxes in cases where the person is too poor to pay. These decisions have been authored largely by Gaddis Gadzhiev, the judge perhaps most identified with market reforms.

The fights over social rights in the post-Soviet constitutional order allow us to see how neoliberalism came to the former Soviet world and also how neoliberalism was resisted. Given the history of the region, one might expect that socialism would provide a wellspring of resistance to neoliberalism. But perhaps the most surprising aspect of the post-Soviet transitions was how few people in public life defended the Soviet vision in any way. Instead, virtually all of the political elite became liberals—many overnight. The pitched battles over neoliberalism in the 1990s in the former Soviet space occurred, as a result, between the institutions of the state rather than between the state and society. In addition, the ideological divide occurred not between socialism and neoliberalism, but between welfare liberalism and neoliberalism. The welfare liberals dominated the constitutional courts and the neoliberals dominated the finance ministries.

A decade after these pitched battles, the fight between welfare liberalism and neoliberalism has largely been won—by welfare liberals. Vladimir Putin and now his successor Dmitri Medvedev in Russia have both definitively rejected neoliberalism, and Russia paid off all of its international debt as quickly as it could precisely to be able to construct a domestic social policy built on welfare liberalism. The Russian government used the extraordinary income that came to the state from the nationalization of the energy sector to promise (and even to deliver on) a more generous welfare state. The economic collapse of 2008 and beyond has taken a toll on the ability of the Russian government

to finance these programs, but the crisis has not changed the government's sense that welfare policy is the right priority for the state.

In Hungary, the socialists (again in power after 2002) have promised welfare liberalism, but the country's continuing debt crisis forced the government to first make cuts to meet EU budget targets and then to cut again because the IMF bailed out the state in early 2009, with the same conditionalities of cutting social programs as part of the package. The socialists have had to accept these cuts—they had nowhere else to go for the funding—but the opposition national conservatives have refused to participate in slashing the welfare budget and are currently outpromising the socialists on social benefits to set themselves up for the elections in 2010. Whether the Constitutional Court will enter the fray on the side of welfare liberalism again has yet to be seen.

Neoliberalism's moment in Eastern Europe was clearly leveraged by thinly disguised threats to let governments collapse over their debts. But as soon as countries in the region have gotten economically strong enough to avoid these threats, welfare states are the first things they reconstruct. And while virtually all other public institutions have taken a beating in opinion polls since the Soviet Union collapsed, constitutional courts remain the only consistently popular institutions in government. In early 2009, it is hard to tell how the former socialist states will survive the new worldwide financial crisis, but if welfare budgets are slashed, it will not be because any domestic political force would have wished it to happen. Neoliberalism as a political ideology has virtually no national support in the region any longer.

Chapter 4

Japan as Mirror

Neoliberalism's Promise and Costs

AMY BOROVY

Japan's postwar emergence as the world's second largest economy and America's role in shaping it have made it a compelling reflecting glass for American capitalism. And yet American commentators have varied widely with respect to what they see when gazing into this mirror. At the height of Japan's economic prominence, many saw simply a "better" version of the United States, an advanced capitalist system rooted in the free market, with admirable systems of education, manufacturing, and management. But later, in the wake of the bursting of the economic bubble in the early 1990s, U.S. economists emphasized Japan's differences, notably the state's role in managing business and finance, dismissing Japan as fruitful terrain for critical self-examination in the West.

Neither view does justice to ways in which Japan offers a thought-provoking reflecting glass for American neoliberalism and for classical liberalism itself. Japan, like the United States, stands out among industrialized capitalist nations in its reluctance to rely on a welfare-state model of social support and assistance. From the early stages of its modernization process, Japanese statesmen made clear their skepticism of the European-style welfare state, proposing instead "a mutual fellowship among the people," in which families and communities would support one another through "a sense of moral duty" (Garon 1997: 38). The model proposed differed significantly from the classical laissez-faire notion of self-determination in that officials expected family members to support their own poor. This obligation was talked about neither in the language of individual autonomy nor as redistribution, but rather in moral terms of charity, community, moral striving, and the benevolence of family. In the words of one bureaucrat writing in 1910, "It is a family shame to send one of its own out to bother outsiders and to depend on others for assistance" (Garon 1997: 41).

In the postwar decades, beginning in the 1970s, as the most dramatic period of economic growth slowed, the government once again harked back to the early roots of social welfare. In response to marked economic slow-

down, the government began cutting back on social assistance and public care services, promoting the agenda of “a Japanese-style welfare society” (*Nihon-gata fukushi shakai*) (Peng 2002: 419; R. Goodman 1998: 145–47; R. Goodman 2002: 16–17; Garon 1997: 26).¹ In the 1980s as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan condemned social welfare as engendering a culture of dependency, the Japanese government criticized welfare dependency on similar grounds as “obstructing the spirit of independence.” And yet in contrast with the neoclassical, neoliberal solutions offered by Reagan and Thatcher to trust social outcomes entirely to market forces, the Japanese state promoted distinctive Japanese traditions, particularly the three-generation family, as Japan’s “hidden asset” in preserving social care (Garon 1997: 223–25; R. Goodman 1998: 140–41). State welfare and social services were minimized; yet the state supported an industrial structure in which companies could offer a family wage to a broad swath of employees; and middle-class women were subsidized to work as full-time homemakers.

Through the services of these surrogate institutions, the family and firm, the Japanese government minimized the dependency, inefficiency, and unemployment often associated with a welfare state. At the same time, Japanese society has been characterized by a remarkable degree of social cohesion and a broad-based middle class. The dilemmas that accompanied the free-market approach to capitalism in late twentieth-century America were noticeably curtailed in Japan, including the polarization of rich and poor, high crime rates, an entrenched impoverished class, and the feminization of poverty (Pharr 2001: 37).

And yet Japanese citizens have paid a heavy price for the stability they have enjoyed: rigidly defined social roles; limited rewards for competition and skill; productivity and the division of labor as the foundations of family life (Brinton 1993; Lebra 1984; Merry White 1987); the shaping of social and spiritual values as an accepted component of workplace and community life (Rohlen 1974; Bestor 1989: 208–14); the fetishization of motherhood as the essence of womanhood; and the invasive presence of the state in daily life (Garon 1993, 1994, 1997). The system has penetrated deeply, shaping the complexion of marriage, labor, and the construction of family itself. Although the notion of a cohesive and encompassing “new middle class” that emerged in the immediate postwar decades is in many respects a “folk sociology,” as William Kelly has written (Kelly 1986: 605), it has permeated all segments of society as a powerful sense-making construct, even those spheres that seemingly remain outside the purview of the urban middle-class domain. The institutions associated with Japan’s dramatic postwar economic rehabilitation (schools, families) carved a shared narrative—if not a shared experience—for a generation of postwar adults (Kelly 1986: 605–6, 612–16; see also Kelly 2002: 232–34). This narrative has been revised but not fundamentally rewritten for subsequent generations.²

The Japanese system, which never fully embraced the agenda of liberalism, the free market, and self-determination through “merit,” now confronts the demands of global capitalism and neoliberal reform. Neoliberal reforms potentially offer a greater degree of lifestyle choices, rewards for individual ambition and achievement, and a measure of freedom from daily social management. And yet all this has come at the inevitable cost of stability and security. In this chapter, I examine these trade-offs. I discuss this in the context of the ethnographic materials on family and enterprise. The method of ethnography is critical to understanding the relevance of Japan as a place that embraces and contests neoliberalization in culturally specific ways and to highlighting the ways in which culture and history frequently answer back to what is commonly regarded as economic rationality.

The state’s move to vacate (or diminish its presence in) the public sphere of social assistance was hardly a neoliberal invention in Japan. Social institutions, particularly the family and company, have historically stepped in for government in preserving social cohesion, social stability, equality, and trust. Japan’s debates surrounding neoliberalism and both its promises and limits offer an important reflecting glass on the cherished premise of neoliberalism (and liberalism itself) more broadly: that individual freedom and private decision making can produce fair and manageable social outcomes in the absence of *both* a welfare state *and* the aggressive management of daily social life, gender subjectivity, and social values that has marked Japanese governance and social institutions. The social constraints that have closely accompanied Japanese corporate welfare, marriage, and motherhood provide ample evidence for this point.

Corporate Welfare: Munificence and Paternalism

Owing to the destruction brought about by the war, and to a history of eschewing government handouts, Japan entered the second half of the twentieth century with almost nonexistent state welfare and social safety nets. Powerful labor unions, reignited in the immediate postwar (and initially sanctioned by the U.S. occupation), prioritized job stability and attention to meeting workers’ “life needs”—in the absence of other resources such as higher wages (Gordon 1993: 379). Large to midsize companies capitulated to some of the demands of workers, offering housing subsidies, a family wage (often including marriage and childbirth bonuses), promotion and compensation systems rooted largely (though not entirely) on seniority, and, perhaps most important, an overriding commitment to job stability.³ Without a generous welfare state, Japanese companies came to function as the most munificent providers of welfare in society.⁴

In the 1960s, managers, who were eager to implement more competitive American-style, “job-based” compensation systems, regained some of their ground by negotiating with a more pliant generation of unions (Gordon 1993:

385–86). The compromise that was forged stressed wages as a reward for “merit,” hard work, loyalty, and adaptability, rather than as seniority-based entitlements. Job stability and needs-based pay remained components of the postwar employment system. However, in the name of “merit” and “loyalty,” employers made consuming demands on workers, demands that some labor historians have criticized as co-opting workers into participating in their own exploitation (Kumazawa 1996). The new workplace culture meant “pay based on merit as managers defined it (not job or seniority), a flexible employment structure where . . . devoted employees could find meaning and reward at work as they helped raise productivity and insure the company’s prosperity” (Gordon 1993: 387). In Gordon’s words, “those workers who made a full commitment to the company should be looked after to the best of the corporation’s ability” (1998: 201), but those who contested corporate interests had little ground to stand on (Kumazawa 1996, see esp. chap. 8, “Twenty Years of a Bank Worker’s Life”). Productivity, quality, and efficiency became keywords (Gordon 1998: 201).

“Merit” came to be defined as diligence and loyalty, and companies rewarded workers who were willing to sacrifice personal needs and desires for the sake of the organization. Yet rewarding “effort” simultaneously made workers vulnerable to demands for unpaid overtime labor, frequent job changes, and frequent transfers requiring workers to reside independently from their families for significant durations (*tanshin funin*).⁵ When Mazda was on the brink of bankruptcy in 1975, Mazda management, employing significant pressure, asked the unions to accept deferment of 60 percent of their year-end bonus. In addition they negotiated to temporarily dispatch a number of white-collar workers to sales centers in remote rural areas, in the endeavor to limit the cost of an inflated middle-manager sector and in turn to improve rates of sales. In return, unions demanded (and received) a guarantee of no layoffs and a comfortable standard of living while away. These negotiations culminated in the revival of the company (Pascale and Rohlen 1988: 159–69).

The system of hiring employees upon graduation, training them, and offering them “lifetime employment” demanded and inspired institutionalized forms of molding the “spirit” (*seishin*) of young employees. In the early postwar years, companies often housed young, single employees in dormitories, and arranging marriages was not outside the purview of a boss’s work. Great importance was accorded not only to training but to the socialization of character (through worker retreats, quasi-military training, and zen meditation); the cultivation of personal values and the facilitation of private life were considered fully within the domain of the firm. The after-hours drinking that businessmen famously indulge in broadens the purview of work to include collegiality, play, even sexual expression. And yet, as Anne Allison reflects, does it not co-opt the private life of workers, transforming them into “workers twenty-four hours a day” (1994: 137)?

The managers who promoted what came to be known as “Japanese-style management” (*Nihon shugi keiei*) took pride in cultivating their employees as humans as well as workers—a notion that, in the 1950s and 1960s, was largely neglected among their American counterparts, whose management hinged largely on Taylorian notions of measuring and maximizing worker productivity.⁶ Management gurus such as Matsushita Kōnosuke (founder of Matsushita Electronics, maker of the Panasonic brand) promoted their management strategies as deeply humanitarian and viewed work and management as reflections of life values and national ideologies.⁷

The Housewife as Welfare Surrogate

The corporation shaped the landscape of family, gender, and society more broadly. Male workers were rewarded for committing themselves to the success of the company, and “the proper role for women was to help them offer this commitment” (Gordon 1998: 201).

Through a series of measures in the early postwar decades, the state, together with large corporate enterprise, subsidized Japanese women to remain at home through a comprehensive family wage, offering access to health care, pension benefits, housing subsidies, and more, through their husbands’ salaries. The home was construed as a “satellite” sphere to Japanese enterprise—a parallel and equally professional sphere in which women worked to sustain their husbands’ productivity. In an article that makes clear the explicit nature of this vision, Andrew Gordon describes the New Life Movement, a 1950s initiative promoted by manufacturing corporations, with sponsorship from the ministries of education and welfare, which trained housewives to embrace modern values by rationalizing housekeeping through modern appliances, renovating kitchens, and democratizing relations with mothers-in-law. The goal was to allow men to “devote themselves to production free from anxiety” (*Manējimento* 1955, in Gordon 1997: 247).⁸ For Japanese women, modernity, democracy, and the professionalization of women’s social roles went hand in hand with the polarization of gender roles and the pull for middle- and upper-middle-class women to remain at home identifying themselves chiefly as wives and mothers.

The generation of middle-class housewives who sustained Japan’s postwar economic “miracle” did so through total social care and primary responsibility for the household (Vogel 1978; Lebra 1976 and 1984; Lock 1993a and b; Merry White 1987; Harris and Long 1993; Long 1996; Borovoy 2005). Takie Lebra’s ethnography of housewives in Tokyo suburb in the 1970s, *Constraint and Fulfillment*, describes women’s work for their husbands as “around-the-body care,” including packing suitcases, preparing baths, and manually changing television channels (1984: 131–32). In public opinion surveys, women reported that husbands “sometimes” to “seldom” performed such daily house-

hold tasks as “making a cup of tea” or “putting own clothes away” (Brinton 1993: 92–95).

Women’s role as laborers has disproportionately been in family-owned businesses, the blue-collar sector of assembly and crafts, and in temporary and part-time labor. Since large numbers of middle-class women began dropping out of the workforce during child-rearing years in the 1950s, young women (routinely expected to quit) and older women returning to work on a part-time or temporary basis have filled the valuable role of “buffer” in an economy in which male contracts have made the labor system relatively inflexible (Brinton 1993: 79–89).

Mothers and Social Care

For postwar middle- and upper-middle-class women, the role of the housewife came increasingly to focus on their work as mothers. From the early years of Japan’s modernization, government officials had pointed to the role of mother as central to instilling modern values of nationhood and education. Through campaigns promoting public safety, hygiene, education, and thrift, motherhood became women’s first sanctioned public role. In an era when women had few political rights, the role of the wife and mother came to be their chief avenue of political participation. In the postwar high-growth era of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the first time in which large numbers of women could afford to stay at home, the work of the housewife and mother was professionalized. In accordance with earlier notions of the “good wife and wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) as central to promoting national values, the work of women at home was seen as the professional equivalent to the male wage earner.

In a system that relies on education as the strongest determinant of upward mobility (and which offers little compensation for those who do not succeed in these terms), middle-class women became intimately involved in their children’s education, in what is often referred to as a “three-legged race.” The race, ideally, leads the child to entrance in an elite university, the key credential for obtaining employment in a reputable, large-scale corporation. The standardized exam system, which emphasizes effort and diligence over innate intelligence also creates a central role for the mother (Merry White 1987). Because the “pedigree” (*gakureki*) system means that university rankings directly affect employment possibilities, a few “condensed” years of exam preparation (Brinton 1993: 78–79) can determine the lifelong outcome of class status.

The crucial importance of the work of motherhood is underscored in varied spheres in Japan, by teachers, pediatricians, and government policy itself. Motherhood is considered the crowning of achievement of women, and for those socialized in the United States, where women as mothers have continually been encouraged by the state to leave the home to earn a wage while entrusting the care of their children to others, such a message is striking in the

way that it recognizes the difficulty, hard work, and good judgment entailed in being a parent (Allison 1996: 112–16; Borovoy 2005: 152–55).

At the same time, the view of motherhood as women's central social contribution has come at a considerable cost. Even today the obstacles to working while raising young children or to prioritizing other values over motherhood (such as the relationship with one's spouse) remain high. An almost insurmountable incompatibility between the current structure of corporate labor and women's ambitions to become both professionals and parents emerges in recent research exploring government policy on "work/life balance" and day care (see, for example, G. Roberts 2002).

One reason is that minimal social assistance means that women at home have sustained almost entirely the burden of caring for the elderly in Japan—a burden that has become the subject of national debate in the context of a rapidly aging society (Lock 1993a: 117–31; Lock 1993b; Harris and Long 1993; Long 1996: 167–70; Long 2005: 44–49). In 1997, 58.9 percent of people over the age of sixty in Japan were living with their children (unmarried or married). This is compared with 12.9 percent in Germany and 16.1 percent in the United States (Prime Minister's Office 1997, in Peng 2002: 416). In addition to the relatively high co-residency rate, Japanese families provide labor-intensive, often invasive forms of care for the elderly, from diaper-changing to medical care including changing IVs. The vast majority of bedridden elderly are cared for by their families (86.5 percent in 1995, with an additional 6.3 percent looked after by families not living with them [National Basic Survey, in Peng 2002: 417]). The vast majority of those caring for the elderly are women, and more than a third are women nursing their husbands' parents, sometimes while simultaneously caring for their own. This burden, historically unquestioned by many women, has been tremendously costly emotionally and physically to women and has emerged as one of the central topics of public debate in recent years.

In the 1990s the government expanded its insurance program for "home nursing," and the industry of home nursing (*hoomu herupaa*) has expanded. And yet much of the government's efforts have been toward continuing to help women care for the elderly at home, with only a recent shift toward creating publicly funded nursing-care facilities—and a continued preference for family care (Long 2005: 34–41; Merry White 2002: 174–79).

All of these roles illustrate the way in which Japanese social stability has been preserved in the absence of welfare spending at the cost of a broad range of social choices for women.

Housewife Stability

As recently as the 1990s, and even still today, Japan stands out among industrialized nations for its remarkably low levels of both out-of-wedlock births

and the feminization of poverty and low-to-moderate levels of divorce (though there has been a recent increase). The Japanese housewife has enjoyed a good deal of stability and autonomy: women lead emotionally independent lives from their husbands—forging bonds with other women and enjoying time with their children. Ethnographies of this generation of women suggest they feel a sense of confidence, stability, and autonomy in raising the family. Because marriage is organized around rigidly gendered, separate worlds, and because motherhood, rather than wifehood, is viewed as the central aspect of women's work, women do not fear that their husbands will “fall out of love” and leave them due to personality conflicts, their appearance, or a husband's romantic whim (Borovoy 2001a: 106–8; Borovoy 2005: 166–70). As Merry White wrote in an early anthropology of Japanese women, calling Americans' attention to the cultural stature of domesticity in postwar middle-class Japan, “Rarely do you hear a Japanese woman say, ‘I'm *just* a housewife’” (1987: 153).

At the same time, women's economic and life opportunities have been dramatically curtailed. Women are secure and respected as financially dependent wives and mothers (even in the absence of an earned wage) but lack mechanisms of support outside the context of marriage. The married women's tax exemption law, which allows housewives to earn up to \$12,000 a year (1.3 million yen) tax free (after that the wages are taxed according to their husbands' tax bracket), has served as a powerful incentive to self-sufficiency through marriage; similarly the lack of social assistance for single mothers and measures such as the disqualification of divorced mothers from income assistance in the first half-year after divorce limit women's access to economic self-sufficiency.

In my ethnography of postwar housewives and the emerging discourse of alcoholism and “codependency” in the 1980s and 1990s, I became interested in the notion of “coping” in married life. When should women finally see their efforts to manage and endure their husbands' alcoholism as unhealthy, exploitative, or even abusive? The line between wifely support and endurance and something that might be called “codependency,” exploitation, or even abuse proved agonizingly difficult to draw for the women themselves. The codependency concept has thrived in a context where there is little language available to articulate the miseries that so closely accompany a social configuration that is in many other respects highly stable, supportive, and productive (Borovoy 2005).

Neoliberal Reform and the Trade-offs of the Managed Economy

In the early 1990s, the Japanese economic bubble “burst”: the value of real estate plummeted, and the value of corporate stocks themselves was questioned. In turn this cast a shadow on the banks that had made substantial

loans to companies, often unmonitored, with the tacit or explicit promise that the loans would be guaranteed by the government. As the economy flagged, the Japanese government stalled by supporting industry through large-scale government spending on public works projects (the “bridges to nowhere” phenomenon)—rather than suffer the hit of allowing banks to collapse (an option that became known as “the hard fall”) and undermining public trust in industry and government.

Even before the “bursting” of Japan’s economic bubble in the early 1990s, the reliance on corporate loyalty and family care in compensation for a minimal welfare state had begun to reach its limits. By the late 1970s, the government had responded to a slowing economic growth rate by cutting social welfare; and this trend continued through the 1980s under the conservative Nakasone administration, under the rubric of “administrative reform” (*gyōsei kaikaku*). Still today Japan has one of the lowest social welfare expenditures (as percent of gross domestic product) among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, owing to its success in transferring the burden of social assistance and personal care to the family, and thus limiting spending on social services (Peng 2002: 415).⁹ By the mid-1980s the system began to catch up with the family; the single wage was no longer sufficient to support the family and the trend for women to reenter the workforce after child rearing accompanied rising numbers of elderly in need of care. According to Peng, “The care needs of the elderly and children were expanding just as the postwar welfare regime, which was structured to accommodate such needs by enabling the women to care for their family members in the home, began to crumble” (2002: 419).

Caregivers’ exhaustion became a topic in public discourse, women mobilized politically for more state support for professionalized care, and women protested silently through a steadily declining total fertility rate (known as *shōshika*), beginning in the late 1970s. In 1989 the newspapers dubbed the crisis “the 1.57 shock” (*ichi ten go nana shokku*), and the total fertility rate is now one of the lowest in the industrialized world at approximately 1.2. Perhaps with the birthrate more in mind than women’s stress and life fulfillment, the government has since supported a number of programs that subsidize professional care, including a long-term care insurance plan, implemented in 2000, which granted the right to care assistance for any family (it is not means-tested) and which has, according to many, gradually had the effect of legitimizing the practice of outsourcing care for the elderly to members outside the family. Still it is worth noting that much government assistance for the elderly takes the form of subsidized assistance from “home-helpers” and proceeds on the premise that the elderly are cared for at home.

In 2001 Jun’ichiro Koizumi was elected as prime minister under the catchphrase “No economic recovery without structural reform” (Okano 2005: 36). He established the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP) to make

policy recommendations to the Diet and to take over the role of reform from the Ministry of Finance in the attempt to induce radical change. The CEFP was designated to be composed of at least 40 percent members of private industry, however the reforms recommended were systematically softened by the ruling party in the Diet, and the dramatic change that many anticipated outside of Japan was less in evidence (see Okano 2005: 38–39). Out of a sense of necessity, Japanese companies began to accommodate to heightened global competition and to internal and external demands for neoliberal reform. In the endeavor to curb the sweeping layoffs that characterized American restructuring in the 1980s, many Japanese companies instead gradually pruned their labor force by offering incentives to early retirement and curbing their numbers of new hires.

With these shifts have come transformations in the pedigree market, and the fundamental assumptions underlying labor, human capital, and the care of the employee by the company. The pedigree system of hiring young employees just out of high school or college and then training them from scratch (independent of any previous skills or training) was an expensive practice for Japanese companies and a stable yet confining one for employees. Large companies have begun to accommodate a demand for workers to cultivate their own talents and interests within the firm through “job matching” (*jobu machingu*) and shorter periods of generalized training. The notion of workers as individual agents with potentially transferable skills has gained traction, and even large, traditional firms such as Hitachi and Matsushita are experimenting with more meritocratic forms of promotion and compensation, though these changes seem to be accompanied by a great deal of caution and skepticism (Borovoy 2005). The growing market for “certificate” qualifications (*shikaku*) in fields from software development to paramedics to hairstyling reinforces the increasing legitimacy of “skills” as a credential over pedigree and the notion of the individual as the autonomous (and mobile) possessor of these skills (see Borovoy 2005). (Indeed college students themselves sometimes seek these credentials while simultaneously attending university classes, a phenomenon known as “double schooling” [*daburu sukuru*]). In a similar kind of shift, companies have cut back on clerical workers who work full time and receive full benefits, creating a broader market for temporary and part-time workers, while shrinking the sector of low-skilled yet stable positions that formed a key sector of the middle class that was nurtured in the context of postwar economic growth.

Shifts toward skills and merit in the upper ranks of the economy and the creation of a more rationalized, part-time or temporary sector in the lower ranks have no doubt created new opportunities and freedoms for many, for example the possibility for young, talented, and ambitious employees at a large firm to be entrusted with real responsibilities and to be promoted based on performance rather than commitment. Greater attention to individual tal-

ent (over seniority) also offers the potential for women to be promoted more broadly. A system that rewards performance and efficiency is more likely to recognize women's contributions than one that rewards loyalty, conveyed through long hours and corporate fraternization.

The marketization of labor and skills created by the temporary agencies have created a new class of young, college-educated women (the single largest clientele of the temp agencies) who find work commensurate with their skills. Their employment occurs in a context where they are freed from the enforced sociality or tacit pressures for overtime that accompany older, paternalistic forms of employment. Young female workers constitute the majority of workers dispatched by temporary agencies (whose business has rapidly expanded in the wake of greater demand for flexible labor and the legalization of more sectors in which temporary workers may be dispatched). Noriko Muraki has described these women as forging "new forms of middle-class identity" in the wake of prior female trajectories of upward mobility through marriage (Muraki 2007).

The freedom to choose one's job, too, represents a marked transformation in views of human capital: from the high-quality employee as someone who has performed highly on standardized tests and is moldable to the employee who possesses inherent talents, desires, and capacities that he then has the opportunity to develop. In recent years there has been a noticeable proliferation of books on display concerning entrepreneurship, how to "become a millionaire," and managing one's time efficiently. (Many are translations of American books.) In 2002, a translation of the American soul-searching classic, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* (*Anata no parashūto wa nani iro desu ka?*)² was doing a brisk business, teaching readers how to shift jobs midcareer and how to find the job that is most suited to their unique talents and passions—instilling the message that work is about capitalizing on and cultivating one's inner talents, rather than about paying one's dues, learning on the job, or simply paying the bills (Borovoy forthcoming: 5–7).

And yet the freedoms offered to temporary workers of inhabiting a more liberalized environment, in which the importance of corporate culture and hierarchy recede, also carry weighty trade-offs. And it is to this set of trade-offs and new forms of disenfranchisement that I now turn my attention.

A growing sector of the labor pool is considered permanent, temporary workers known as "free workers," or "freeters" (*furiitaa*).¹⁰ In a survey of two thousand youths in their teens and twenties begun in the 1995, the Japan Institute of Labor (JIL) found that one-third of the youths had had experience as freeters. Most freeters initially report that their desire is to work only part-time; however a follow-up survey three years later showed that many hoped to work as full-time company "members" (*seishain*) or to manage their own business (*jieigyō*), and those wishing only for part-time jobs constituted only 4 percent (Kosugi et al. 2001: 2).

The freeters, who in the 1980s were initially perceived as representing a healthy critique of the salaryman lifestyle and pedigree society, increasingly came to be viewed as a national problem—the result of a lean labor market in which stable upwardly mobile positions have increasingly been converted to temporary labor. Although a number of youths initially chose to take the path of the freeters for such reasons as the desire to treat “work as work” and to cultivate a personal life that is independent from the company, they walk a risky tightrope, far from the celebrated freedom that some expected to accompany this shift. The JIL data reveal the costs of unstable employment, a dearth of training, and an absence of an upwardly mobile trajectory.

Freeters average the same number of days and hours as regular employees (Kosugi et al. 2000: 46) and yet they enjoy minimal safety nets, holidays, year-end bonuses, or health care; many report that they do not participate in the national pension plan (Kosugi et al. 2000: 274). Those who work part-time bring in relatively low wages per hour, with relatively little change in compensation for age or seniority. Freeters feel less motivation (*yarigai*) and sense of job suitability (*tekishoku kan*) than do full-time company members, particularly in the case of males. The number of both males and females who feel that they would like to establish themselves in their current work is small, and most feel that working as a freeter is disadvantageous (Kosugi et al. 2001: 1–2).

The ethnographic surveys conducted document the depressed morality of many of these part-time, flexible workers, many of whom find themselves shamed by the same society that increasingly demands such labor. In a collection of ethnographic interviews of ninety-seven *furiitaa* published by the Japan Institute of Labor, one youth recounts the story of replying to an advertisement in the window for part-time work at a local shop, only to be chastised by the owner for not seeking a permanent and more reliable job.¹¹

According to the Japan Institute of Labor, freeters who eschew the salaried life and work part-time in order to pursue a dream or talent (*yume tsuikyū gata*) constitute a relatively small portion of the group, only 15 percent. The others reveal the difficulty of leaving the world of part-time work once one has embarked on this path. Moving from the ranks of the freeters into full-time employment proves difficult, and the ability to leave the world of part-time work for full-time company membership is correlated to the shortness of time spent as a part-time worker (Kosugi et al. 2001: 2). The gap between those who have stable, permanent jobs with medium to large-size firms and those who move from temporary position to temporary position threatens to become the largest cleavage in Japanese society, marking not only material differences but a host of differences in belief systems, class, and culture (see Brinton forthcoming; Slater forthcoming; Ishida forthcoming; Saitō and Genda 2005; Tachibanaki 2006).

The “parasites” (*parasaito*) or “post-youth” (*posuto seinenki*) (Yamada 1999: 138) phenomenon also stands out as a vivid example of the trade-offs that confront Japan’s youth in transitioning from the constraining, managed, and

yet stable economy of the high-growth era to a neoliberal era of more fluid labor markets and greater freedom of lifestyle choice. The co-residency rate of young unmarried adults with their parents is high—and rising. (In 1996, 80 percent of young working adults in their twenties resided with their parents, up from 70 percent in 1975.) Of those between thirty and thirty-four, 70 percent resided with their parents (compared with 50 percent in 1975) (Ministry of Health and Welfare 1998, in Peng 2002: 418).

The most common such population are the “parasite singles” (*parasaito shinguru*), young working men and women in their twenties and early thirties who continue to reside in their parents’ home, thus utilizing all their income as disposable income to enjoy the pleasures of consumerism and sociality.

The parasites (along with the freeters) also suggest a horizon of expanded possibilities for Japanese youth, particularly for women, who can now enjoy a period of relative freedom and even professionalism, before buckling down to the all-encompassing task of raising a family and sustaining a home. And yet, as with the *furiitaa*, there is a counternarrative to that of American social commentators who tend to interpret this phenomenon as evidence of young women protesting traditional social roles and gender roles (Orenstein 2001). Yamada Masahiro, the sociologist who initially coined the term in his influential book *The Age of Parasite Singles* (*Parasaito shinguru no jidai* [1999]), on the contrary emphasizes parasitism as a form of risk aversion: a strategy for maintaining middle-class stability and pursuing upward mobility in a society that has historically offered a scanty welfare safety net outside of the family and yet is increasingly stretched in supporting stable, upwardly mobile, single wage-earners through training, promotion, and benefits. Yamada attributes the parasite phenomenon to the continuing desire among young people to maintain a “standard life course” (*hyō junteki raifusutairu shikō*) in a context in which the infrastructure that preserved upward mobility and the financial independence of young people (family wage, corporate welfare [*kigyō fukushi*], seniority-based wages [*nenkōjoretsu chingin*], and the peripheral employment of women) began to fray (1999: 170, 173–75).¹² Young Japanese women in particular, Yamada argues, have not been socialized to pursue economic independence (1999: 143), and in a culture in which historically the notion of absolute equality between the sexes is relatively weak, there persists a continuing ambition to attain the stable lifestyle of the fully supported housewife, or a “new variety” of the old type (*shin sengo shufu shikō*).¹³ The trajectory from temporary employment, to marriage, to full-time motherhood, which sustained a nonworking middle-class of women in the high-growth era, is less viable in an era in which men themselves are taking longer to be upwardly mobile; parasitism has become women’s strategy to defer until they can find an appropriate partner who will sustain their economic stability.¹⁴ Parasitism is not antithetical to but in many ways continuous with the same lifestyle values which fuel the desire to be supported in marriage.¹⁵

Thus the rupture of the social fabric that parasitism exacerbates emerges

not from “role refusal” but rather a growing rift between families who can and cannot support their children’s ambitions to fulfill hallowed middle-class objectives: a new emphasis on “birth” (*umare*) rather than “merit” (*nōryoku*) (Yamada 1999: 123; see also Forger 2005; Yamada 2000).¹⁶

The “parasite singles” may in many ways be the most healthy form of dependents inhabiting post-bubble-era Japan, since they are preparing themselves for eventual self-sufficiency, however slowly. Beyond this, the family supports an array of dependent, disenfranchised figures, including those defined as NEET (“not in education, employment or training”) and a growing number of youths known as the “hideaways” (*hikikomori*), who silently confine themselves to their rooms, refusing to leave and often even to speak to anyone (Jones 2006; Zielenziger 2006; Borovoy 2008). In the most severe cases, the mothers bring three meals a day to the child’s door, hoping eventually that he or she will be coaxed to come out. Some estimate that the number of such hideaways has reached one million. The exact causes of *hikikomori* are unknown and likely overdetermined, but from all available evidence, it seems that a wide variety of issues may spur teens and young adults to join this hidden world—from the experience of being teased at school to the harboring of major psychopathology. What is remarkable about the phenomenon of *hikikomori* is not so much the cause (which is not generalizable) but the fact that the solution for this wide array of social and psychological problems continues to lie in retreating to the home, with the care of the mother supplementing (or supplanting) broader social services in the spheres of mental health care, special education, and social welfare (Borovoy 2008: 566–69).

Conclusion

Neoliberal conservatism of the 1980s demonized the culture of state welfare in Britain and the United States and successfully created an image of state support as engendering a culture of “dependency,” laziness, and irresponsibility—an image that liberals found difficult to contest and which mobilized broader popular support for welfare reform and ushered in the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism.

In contrast, the Japanese system of self-support through paternalistic yet highly constraining institutions appears to be more difficult to contest. Those constituencies that might be considered “liberal” (including feminists, the Democratic Party of Japan, and left-leaning academics) criticize the conservative social values attached to Japan’s management of society and economy; yet at the same time they often support the structures of equality, stability, family integrity, and state management that have sustained these values.

Japanese feminists are a particularly evocative example of this dilemma. Feminists, particularly Marxist feminists, have been outspoken critics of the state’s exploitation of women’s free labor at home since the 1970s, and this

critique has intensified in the context of Japan's rapidly aging population (see Ueno 1990). Radical feminists of the "women's lib" (*ūman ribu*) movement in the 1970s also marched in protest against rigidly defined gender roles, traditional marriage, and the suppression of self-expression and women's sexuality in contemporary society. At the same time, some feminists have been outspoken critics of the legalization of the birth control pill, which was not legalized until June 1999, because they worry about the pill's effects on women's bodies and perceive its acceptance as evidence of a trend toward the embrace of Western feminism.¹⁷ They have also questioned the ethics of expanding the availability of immigrant labor for childcare and inviting the class and racial divisions that would accompany such an arrangement. Many feminists (and other progressive voices) also oppose the liberalization of the job market and the decline of the family wage, despite the possibilities of equal opportunity and meritocracy that such liberalization might offer.¹⁸

Economists and sociologists warn against the polarization of Japanese society into "winners" and "losers" (*kachigumi*, *makegumi*) and the social effects this would have. The notions of a "competitive society" (*kyōsō shakai*) or "meritocracy" (*nōryoku shugi shakai*, *shūsai seido*, *jitsuryoku shugi shakai*) are talked about as highly controversial and regarded as potentially damaging.

The state, too, weighs trade-offs in determining how to respond to the declining birth rate and the demands for low-skilled labor. Liberalizing immigration laws or subsidizing privately run day care will limit the government's ability to shape and unify social values. Even in its reforms that respond to the declining birthrate and women's silent protest, the state seems to continue to address the issue from the standpoint of fostering reproductivity rather than from the standpoint of equal opportunity for both genders (Peng 2002).

In neoliberal discourse, government aid is often pitted against individual autonomy and uncurtailed free-market transactions. Japanese capitalism has historically avoided both of these extremes by scrupulously managing its society through support for the family structure, corporate beneficence and paternalism, careful attention to socialization, and the marginalization of heterogeneous minorities and other groups. Its capitalism has come less at the cost of inequality or dependency than at the cost of individual choice, freedom, and opportunity, gender equality, and meritocracy. The family (in particular the wife and mother) has borne the brunt of this increasing burden as corporate welfare is tightened. As Japanese citizens engage in wide-ranging debates about how to shoulder the burden of increasing demands for flexible labor, leaner capitalism, and heightened competition, it will be interesting to see how these trade-offs are resolved. For the moment, examining the sacrifices that the Japanese have made for their highly integrated society reveals more broadly the illusory nature of the neoliberal promise: that there need be no trade-offs between the exercise of free competition and individual desire and the outcomes of social protection and equality.

Part II

Politics in the Public-Private Divide

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Chapter 5

Local Political Geography and American Political Identity

ROBERT R. RODGERS AND STEPHEN MACEDO

Alexis de Tocqueville famously argued for the importance of local politics as a school of national citizenship: “Local institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they put it within people’s reach; they teach people to appreciate its peaceful enjoyment and accustom them to make use of it. Without local institutions a nation may give itself a free government, but it has not the spirit of liberty” (Tocqueville 1969: 63). A high degree of administrative decentralization in the United States helped keep government close and accessible to ordinary citizens, Tocqueville observed. Because citizens naturally take an interest in what affects them directly—often mundane matters such as roads and garbage collection—decentralization helped to translate this interest into the possibility of influence and so activity. Local government invited the direct participation of ordinary citizens in democratic self-government.

The local political geography of the United States, however, has changed dramatically since the days when Tocqueville toured the nation, raising questions about the quality of the education in democracy currently provided by local politics. Some would argue that these schools of democracy, touted by Tocqueville and others, are broken: localities are too outsized, they claim, and suburbanization saps the pedagogical potential of local politics. This essay examines these claims by exploring some of the myriad ways that local political institutions structure our political lives, interests, and identities, and our capacity for political agency.

We argue here for the importance of local institutions in giving shape and structure to Americans’ civic lives. We seek to depict—albeit in broad brushstrokes—how the local and regional political geography of the nation shapes Americans’ interests, identities, and capacities to participate in civic life. We pay special attention to America’s evolving local political structures: the ways in which places have become more stratified by class while often remaining segregated by race, and the many ways that local government has become more privatized and removed from everyday domains accessible to citizens.

We focus on some of the principal changes of the past half-century in the places people call home and the wider impact of changing neighborhoods and political communities.

Metropolitan Growth and Declining Civic Engagement

Over the past fifty-five years, the population of the United States exploded from 150 million to more than 300 million. This tremendous growth has been captured entirely by the nation's metropolitan regions—in fact, non-metropolitan America has lost inhabitants through the years. Long-standing metro regions, such as those centered on historic cities like New York and Philadelphia, have gotten larger while growth in other places allowed up-and-coming regions to attain metropolitan status for the first time. In 1950, only the fourteen most populous metropolitan regions topped the one-million-person mark, and only 168 areas met the criteria to be considered “metropolitan.”¹ By 2000, fifty metro areas had more than one million residents, and together they accounted for well over half of the nation's population. As the established metro areas attracted new residents over those five decades, 194 additional areas grew a sufficient amount to gain metropolitan status. All told, over 80 percent of Americans now live in one of the nation's 362 metro regions (Hobbs and Stoops 2002).

Not only has the population of metropolitan regions grown enormously over the past half-century, but so too have their geographic areas. In fact, the aggregate increase in urbanized area has far outpaced population growth across the country. A recent study by the Brookings Institution established that “most metropolitan areas in the United States are adding urbanized land at a much faster rate than they are adding population” (Fulton et al. 2001: 1). Of the 281 metro areas studied by Brookings, all but 17 gained more elbow room per person between 1982 and 1997. In other words, metropolitan America is spreading out and population densities are decreasing even as overall populations are increasing.

During the same period that saw the doubling of the nation's population and the dramatic growth of metropolitan regions, we have witnessed a troubling decline in civic engagement (see, e.g., Putnam 2000 and Macedo et al. 2005). The decline is not uniform across the board, however. The percentage of voting eligible Americans who cast a ballot for president in 2008 was about ten points higher than the modern nadir of 51.7 percent in 1996 (McDonald 2008). Nonetheless, many commentators continue to decry the fact that nearly four in ten Americans eligible to vote stayed away from the polls even in the historic election of 2008, especially in view of the campaigns' concerted efforts to get out the vote (registering new voters and mobilizing registrants to cast ballots) as well as states' efforts to make voting more convenient by allowing mail-in or early voting. Beyond turnout rates in national elections,

the evidence for falling participation is much clearer with respect to local communities. From showing up at the polls to joining with others to fix community problems, the percentage of citizens active in the public affairs of their local communities has been on the wane for some time. A quick glance at the available evidence is quite telling.

Only a few longitudinal data sets of local voting exist because they are so difficult to construct, but the most authoritative studies of voting in municipal elections show declines from the 1930s through the 1980s (Karnig and Walter 1983; see also Karnig and Walter 1993). Survey data support these findings of decreasing turnout. The percentage of survey respondents who reported always voting in local elections decreased by a quarter between 1967 and 1987, from 47 percent to 35 percent (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). A recent election held in the authors' local community of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, provides a rather typical example of the depths of current-day apathy among the public: only eight percent of the township's registered voters showed up at the polls to choose members of the school board and to pass judgment on the proposed school budget (Kahn 2007).

Not only are more Americans remaining silent on election day, they are refraining from other types of engagement with their communities throughout the rest of the year, as well. Political scientist Robert Putnam, using data from monthly surveys conducted between 1973 and 1994 by the Roper organization, observed decreases in the frequency of twelve civic activities, from the relatively effortless signing of a petition to the commitment-laden decision to run for public office (Putnam 2000: 40–46).² He observed, "Between 1973 and 1994 the number of Americans who attended even one public meeting on town or school affairs in the previous year was cut by 40 percent. Over the same two decades the ranks of those who had served as an officer or a committee member for a local club or organization—any local club or organization—were thinned by an identical 40 percent. . . . We now have sixteen million fewer participants in public meetings about local affairs, eight million fewer committee members, [and] eight million fewer local organizational leaders" (Putnam 2000: 42). All in all, it's clear that Americans have become less likely to participate in the political and civic life of their communities.³

Deciphering the Interaction Between Growth and Disengagement

There are strong reasons to believe that the declines in local political and civic activity are caused in part by the growth of metropolitan regions. Political thinkers have long fretted about the optimal size for democracies. Aristotle captured what would be near consensus for centuries (until the American experiment provided support for a countervailing view) when he argued that democracies must be small enough for citizens to be familiar with one another. Democratic theorist Robert Dahl expressed this age-old thinking: "The city-

state must be small in area and in population. Its dimensions are to be human, not colossal, the dimensions not of an empire but of a town, so that when the youth becomes the man he knows his town, its inhabitants, its countryside" (Dahl 1967: 964).

What is it about larger populations that give democratic theorists cause for concern?⁴ As political scientist Eric Oliver notes, "Early classics of urban sociology argue that the size, density, and heterogeneity of larger places dissolves the social and psychological bonds that exist between neighbors of small towns. Surrounded by more strangers and greater social uncertainty, urbanites putatively seek psychic refuge in their primary social relations, shy away from formalized social contact, or feel content as 'bystanders' to the social process" (J. E. Oliver 2000: 363). As the population increases, no longer is local politics an easily approachable and workable affair involving friends and acquaintances. The potential for more off-putting conflict becomes much greater, and with familiar faces being lost in the crowd, social networks that act to recruit people into civic life may weaken.⁵ In addition, one's voice would seem to have less of an impact in more populous places where competing voices all too often create a cacophonous public sphere. Each individual's circle of influence would be proportionately smaller, one's elected representatives would have more constituents, and the probability of influencing outcomes would decrease.⁶ In these ways, community size may be inversely related to feelings of political efficacy and the likelihood of being mobilized into political or civic activity.

Of course, even though it makes sense that larger places may depress civic engagement and the facts show that engagement has decreased as our metropolitan places have grown, we need more to establish a causal connection between these two simultaneously occurring phenomena. Fortunately, a number of scholars have examined this issue empirically and found that, with the exception of voting in local elections (see J. E. Oliver 2000: 366; J. E. Oliver 2001: chap. 2; Kelleher and Lowery 2004), the size of a community is negatively related to the likelihood of becoming involved in it.

Robert Putnam mustered considerable evidence showing that residents of larger metropolitan areas are less likely to be civically engaged than their counterparts in smaller communities. He opines, "Getting involved in community affairs is more inviting—or abstention less attractive—when the scale of everyday life is smaller and more intimate" (Putnam 2000: 205). With regard to community size, he reports: "Compared with other Americans, residents of the nation's largest metropolitan areas . . . report 10–15 percent fewer group memberships, attend 10–15 percent fewer club meetings, attend church about 10–20 percent less frequently, and are about 30–40 percent less likely to serve as officers or committee members of local organizations or to attend public meetings on local affairs" (Putnam 2000: 205). Moreover, Putnam recognizes the impact of community growth: traffic becomes more congested,

commutes lengthen, minutes spent isolated in cars mount, leaving people with less time for other pursuits. Putnam finds that “each additional ten minutes in daily commuting time cuts involvement in community affairs by ten percent” (Putnam 2000: 213; see also Williamson 2004). Both of these findings hold up even after controlling for a variety of relevant individual-level factors that affect the likelihood of participation, such as education, income, and age (Putnam 2000: 206).

Putnam relates the decline of participatory activities to declining “social capital,” which he understands as networks of cooperative relationships that create and foster norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness.⁷ Others explain the falloffs on the basis of declining trust: they note that residents of larger places are less likely to trust other people and government as a general matter and argue that the relative lack of trust contributes to lower levels of civic engagement (see, e.g., Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Eric Oliver, using a different data set, discovered a similar negative relationship between city size and civic engagement, which he attributed to decreases in mobilization, interest in local politics, and feelings of political efficacy as city size increases (J. E. Oliver 2000: 369; and 2001: 52–65). In his study of New England town meetings, Frank Bryan (2004) argued that citizens participate more in smaller places because they are more likely to have an impact on outcomes.⁸ In short, though explanations differ, empirical studies uniformly show that in larger places community recedes and people tend to disengage from public life.

Efforts to Counteract Civic Disengagement

Growing communities have tried a multitude of measures, some successful, some not, to encourage more participation and keep their governments close to the people. A straightforward approach is to alter the basic structure of local government to reduce the size of each councilperson’s constituency, for example, by increasing the size of the city or town council or by creating legislative districts or wards in place of at-large positions.⁹ Turnout at local elections can be increased by forms of direct mobilization as simple as mailing sample ballots and the location of polling places to voters (Macedo et al. 2005: 114).¹⁰ Another way to overcome the remoteness of local government is to open additional channels for citizens to participate between elections, such as advisory boards or citizen commissions. When city hall is distant, it makes sense to bring city government closer to the concerns of individual neighborhoods by adding a more localized layer of government—the neighborhood is, after all, where citizens are most affected by government activity or inactivity and so should be the place where citizens have the most to say. Fully 60 percent of cities with populations over 100,000 employed some form of neighborhood council, although not all are active or well-functioning (Scavo 1993; Berry, Portney, and Thomson 1993).

Archon Fung (2004) chronicles a number of innovative programs adopted by cities seeking greater public involvement in neighborhood planning, crime prevention, municipal budgeting, and the workings of schools. Such efforts to bolster participation through deliberative mechanisms are supported by a growing body of work within political theory that proclaims the importance of opportunities for citizens to come together and deliberate about pressing public issues (see Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Bohman 1996; Fishkin 1992). The goal can go beyond simply fostering public discussion to include public involvement in the “co-production” of a variety of public goods. Public safety is an obvious area where citizen involvement is crucial: from block watches to volunteer fire departments, citizens engage in a variety of activities essential to creating safer communities.¹¹ Few public recreation programs could operate without the volunteer work of citizens, and public education across America would be diminished without the myriad contributions parents make to their local schools. Fung and others argue that such local efforts can help foster not only a more educated and tolerant citizenry but more legitimate and more effective public policies, and some evidence indicates that participation in deliberative forums can lead to significant increases in other forms of civic engagement as well (Delli Carpini, Jacobs, and Cook 2004).

Another option—consistent with the Tocquevillian logic we described at the outset—is to keep local governments close enough to the people for democracy to flourish. In his 1967 presidential address to the American Political Science Association, Robert Dahl proposed dividing large metropolitan areas into more manageable democratic spaces, “political unit[s] of more truly human proportions in which a citizen can acquire confidence and mastery of the arts of politics—that is, of the arts required for shaping a good life in common with fellow citizens” (Dahl 1967: 967). The optimal size, which Dahl argued lies between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, would be large enough to marshal the “great” governmental power needed to address the problems of the day yet also small enough “so that citizens can participate extensively in determining the ways in which this great power will be used” (Dahl 1967: 967).

Forty years after Dahl’s address, his hoped-for political decentralization has in some fashion come to pass, but in a form that has worsened inequalities among local political communities. Through suburbanization, our metropolitan regions have fragmented to a significant degree, creating many smaller jurisdictions and draining many of the larger ones. As noted above, metropolitan areas have been growing, but many central cities, especially the old industrial ones of the Northeast and Midwest, have faced dramatic declines in population. St. Louis, for example, had 856,796 residents in 1950 but only 347,181 by 2006, a drop of nearly 60 percent. The St. Louis metropolitan region, however, did not see a decrease in population over the same time period; its population increased a healthy 66 percent from 1,681,281 to 2,796,368.

As its suburbs multiplied and flourished, the city of St. Louis's share of the region's population collapsed from a bit over half in 1950 to a mere 12 percent in 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau 1952 and 2006). Buffalo, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and numerous other "cold, wet places" faced similarly dramatic declines, and despite some talk about the rebirth of America's great cities, many continue to lose residents (Glaeser and Shapiro 2003). Even those cities that grew during the 1990s saw their suburbs far outpace their own growth (Berube 2003). Moreover, the socioeconomic profiles of many older cities along with their "at risk" suburbs have diverged radically from the wealthier suburbs. We thus need to consider not just metropolitan growth but also the fragmented form that this growth has taken. Both suburbanization and intraregional stratification are crucial to assessing the civic consequences of postwar changes in American political geography.

The Suburbanization of America

The mass exodus from America's cities during the second half of the twentieth century has caused a dramatic "decentering" of the population within metropolitan regions, deeply affecting the political geography of the United States. While the percentage of the total population living in central cities has remained relatively constant since 1950, the suburban percentage has increased from less than a quarter to more than half (Hobbs and Stoops 2002).¹² More Americans now live in the suburbs than in our central cities and rural places combined, and some of our major metropolitan regions have all but lost their urban character.

A suburban ideal is now firmly implanted in American culture and consciousness. As the preeminent historian of American suburbanization, Kenneth Jackson, puts it, "Suburbia symbolizes the fullest, most unadulterated embodiment of contemporary culture; it is a manifestation of such fundamental characteristics of American society as conspicuous consumption, a reliance on the automobile, upward mobility, the separation of the family into nuclear units, the widening division between work and leisure, and a tendency toward racial and economic exclusiveness" (K. Jackson 1985: 4). In the later half of the twentieth century, suburbia became as American as apple pie and baseball.¹³

That America has become a suburban nation has few doubters. The manifestations of suburbanization are ubiquitous across the American landscape: sprawling residential subdivisions of single-family houses on relatively large lots, dispersed low-rise office parks, strip malls along every major roadway, shopping centers surrounded by vast parking lots, and roads and more roads with seemingly ever increasing traffic. But defining what exactly we mean by suburbia presents a much more formidable challenge (as does the attempt to understand its impact on the American polity). We may know it when we see

it, but ironing out a definition is easier said than done. Jackson notes the definitional difficulty: “Economists assign suburban status on the basis of functional relationships between the core and the surrounding region; demographers on the basis of residential density or commuting patterns; architects on the basis of building type; and sociologists on the basis of behavior or ‘way of life’” (K. Jackson 1985: 5).¹⁴

While all of these approaches have merit, many social scientists rely on Census Bureau designations to identify the suburbs. Despite problems with over- and underinclusion, they define as suburban any part of a metropolitan area outside the jurisdictional boundaries of its central city.¹⁵ This glosses over the fact that many central cities such as Houston, Phoenix, and even New York City have large swaths of suburban-type development. In addition, metropolitan areas include a wide range of areas outside central cities, because the Census Bureau uses counties as building blocks (except in New England where towns are used instead). Eric Oliver comments on the diversity of such places in New Jersey: “Elizabeth and Hoboken are gritty and industrial; Montclair is middle-class and racially diverse; Short Hills is affluent and residential; Princeton has office parks, a university, and shopping malls; Cranbury and Hopewell still retain the flavor of small, rural towns” (J. E. Oliver 2001: 10). Yet all are commonly classified as suburban.

Much of the definitional problem stems from the fact that the nation’s suburbs have developed over the course of many decades and under different legal frameworks, transportation systems, and local economic structures. As a result, they have taken on a variety of forms, including dense streetcar suburbs, postwar Levittown-like subdivisions, and the currently trendy edge cities (Hayden 2003; K. Jackson 1985; Garreau 1991). Nonetheless, despite some inherent imprecision, three key elements of American suburbia stand out: the prevalence of owner-occupied single-family detached homes; jurisdictional autonomy; and internal homogeneity in a more diverse metropolitan region. Each of these elements captures a critical facet of the American suburban experience, and each in turn has a significant impact on the political identity of suburbanites as well as their capacity and motivation to become involved in civic life. As detailed below, each element contributes to either a narrowing of the public sphere or the privatization of public life.

Low-Density Residential Housing Developments

The suburban form—a house, preferably a new one, with a large yard in a neighborhood of similar houses—has become a cultural ideal, the place where comfort, security, social harmony, and upward mobility are situated.¹⁶ The suburban dream of a better home and nice community in a semibucolic setting has a long history in the American ethos.¹⁷ Suburbs arose from the utopian aspirations of the middle class, and early on the suburbs were extolled

for their contribution to the American democratic character.¹⁸ The most influential residential architect and landscape gardener of the mid-nineteenth century, Andrew Jackson Downing, captured this sentiment as he encouraged his fellow citizens to move out from the city: "The love of country is inseparably connected with love of home. Whatever, therefore, leads men to assemble the comforts and elegancies of life around his habitations, tends to increase local attachments, and render domestic life more delightful; thus not only augmenting his own enjoyment but strengthening his patriotism, and making him a better citizen" (quoted in K. Jackson 1985: 65).¹⁹ From the Jeffersonian vision of independent yeomen actively engaged in community affairs to the postwar belief that suburbanization would thwart any threat of homegrown communism,²⁰ many have argued that homeownership encourages political participation. But the reality of today's American suburbs departs from the buoyant vision of robust suburban citizenship.

Suburban architecture and community design create a secure and comforting existence for suburbanites, perhaps too comforting. The typical suburban home, with lots of square footage, central air to regulate the temperature year-round, and countless electronic entertainment options, is a nice place to spend time.²¹ The American suburban ideal may, however, have some negative civic consequences: the amenities of the modern American home draw people inward, away from casual and impromptu engagement with others in the larger community. An emblem of privatization is the absence of a front porch on the typical American suburban home. Front porches have been replaced with backyard decks. Rather than facing the public street, outside sitting areas are now secluded and often fenced in to provide even greater isolation from the outside world.²² Dominating the front of the prototypical suburban home is neither a porch nor the front door, but rather the garage containing the indispensable instrument of suburban life, the automobile.

Travel by car is often extremely convenient, but from a civic standpoint, here too there are costs. As William Schneider says of the all-too-obvious allure of the automobile: "With a car you can go anywhere you want, anytime you want, in the comfort of your own private space" (W. Schneider 1992: 37). The automobile's freedom and convenience comes at the expense of random, everyday contacts with acquaintances and strangers alike that occur on sidewalks and public transit. As Jane Jacobs observed in her 1961 classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, "Lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow" (Jacobs 1961: 71).²³ The same cannot be said of running into someone while driving a car (J. Rose 1994).²⁴

Suburban homes convey a sense of comfort and security, as do the communities that typically surround them. This is, in part, because of the segregation of land uses mandated by zoning laws. While the separation of residences from gravel pits, aluminum smelters, and pig farms is without doubt a good

thing, zoning has done much to debilitate the civic fabric of American communities (see Kunstler 1993; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). James Howard Kunstler, one of the most outspoken critics of American suburbs, complains, "The main problem with [the suburban subdivision] was that it dispensed with all the traditional connections and continuities of community life, and replaced them with little more than cars and television" (Kunstler 1993: 105).

Large lots spread things out, and single-use zoning makes owning a car essential for commuting to work and shopping.²⁵ Sidewalks—where they exist at all in suburbia—have been deserted by most pedestrians because everyday destinations are too far to walk. Zoning that separates land uses also encourages economic segregation. Gone are the homes over main street storefronts of small-town America, the carriage houses backing up on alleyways, and the apartment buildings populated by the types of people not frequently found in new suburban developments: the unmarried, low-wage workers, and young couples. Suburban developments are typically designed with different affordability options clustered, and gates are frequently used to separate developments from what could be considered the larger community. In gated communities, public space is privatized: parks, community centers, even the streets are off-limits to nonresidents (Blakely and Snyder 1999).

The trend toward privatization goes beyond space to governance: suburban developments are frequently governed by homeowners associations. With around 8,000 new associations being organized annually, typically through deed restrictions, an estimated 57 million Americans now live in one of the 286,000 communities governed by a homeowners association (McKenzie 1994: 11; Community Associations Institute, n.d.). In some parts of the country, it is difficult to find a new home that is not part of an association. Homeowners associations are "private governments," that is, voluntary and exclusive organizations that supplement services provided by the public sector, and they have some power to coerce their members.²⁶ They collect mandatory fees, akin to local taxes, to provide many of the services traditionally provided by local governments, such as trash collection, road maintenance, and management of parks and other property held in common. They also make and enforce rules that regulate an incredibly broad range of subject matter, from determining acceptable paint colors to governing the permissibility of pets and guests (McKenzie 1994).

Homeowners associations appear to mimic local public governments by providing a wealth of opportunities for individuals to participate in local affairs. They hold elections to choose their leaders and typically maintain a variety of committees that address the needs of the community—an estimated 2.1 million Americans serve as board or committee members (Community Associations Institute, n.d.). Upon occasion they become involved in affairs outside their borders, lobbying the public government on behalf of the inter-

ests of their residents. As the industry-sponsored guide to homeowners, *An Introduction to Community Association Living*, states, "Community associations are arguably the most representative and responsive form of democracy found in America today" (Community Associations Institute 2003: 26). Does the spread of homeowners associations across the country signal a rebirth of Tocquevillian democracy?

Despite these seemingly positive attributes, many observers express doubts; they argue that homeowners associations have negative effects on the political identity of residents and the civic fabric of the larger community. Edward Hannaman, the official charged with regulating homeowners associations in New Jersey, testified that: "complaints revealed an 'undemocratic life' in many associations, with homeowners unable to obtain the attention of their board or manager. Boards, 'acting contrary to law, their governing documents or to fundamental democratic principles, are unstoppable without extreme owner effort and often costly litigation.' Board members 'dispute compliance' with their legal obligations and use their powers to punish owners with opposing views. 'The complete absence of even minimally required standards, training or even orientation for those sitting on boards and the lack of independent oversight is readily apparent in the way boards exercise control.'"²⁷ Indeed, the governance structures and practices adopted by most homeowners associations depart from basic democratic principles. The franchise is limited to homeowners, not renters, and the principle of one person, one vote is violated because votes are allotted to households, sometimes weighted by property value. Meetings where association business is conducted may be private (sunshine laws do not apply), and residents lack free speech and other constitutional guarantees.

The lack of democratic rights only infrequently gives rise to protest, however, because most homeowners associations are plagued by indifference.²⁸ Many boards delegate association business to hired professionals, creating a system that, in the words of one author, "attempts to replace politics with management" (McKenzie 1994: 18). To the degree that homeowners associations do manage to nurture a sense of collective identity among residents, it takes a toll on relations with those outside the community, a theme that we will return to below. As Stephen Macedo and colleagues note, "The reluctance of prosperous homeowners whose services are provided by their association to contribute to public coffers may also leave fewer resources to meet the needs of those outside their neighborhood, attenuating the possibilities for redistribution and the promotion of other inclusive public goods within the public sector" (Macedo et al. 2005: 103).

Homeowners associations are thus emblematic of the privatized restructuring of neighborhoods and residential communities. They encourage an impoverished notion of shared fate and a narrowly focused form of civic engagement, one aimed at advancing the particular interests of well-defined and

often privileged groups. As Iris Marion Young argues, behind the walls of their suburban enclaves, the privileged lose awareness of the problems and difficulties facing those on the outside and devote their time and energy to advancing their own private interests (Young 2000: 214–15). Homeowners associations exemplify the dangers inherent in the small scale and homogeneity of suburbia: the “schools of democracy” created by such small and insular communities would seem doomed to failure.

Homeowners associations are just one incarnation of the suburban effort to organize government in service of particularized private interests. The creation of separate local governmental jurisdictions to gain control of local politics has been a driving force behind suburbanization itself. We thus turn our attention to the second defining element of suburbia: jurisdictional fragmentation.

Jurisdictional Fragmentation of Metropolitan Areas

Although some cities in the South and West extended their jurisdictional boundaries to capture growth at the urban fringe, other cities have encountered stiff opposition to annexation, and many lack this power altogether (Teaford 1979: chap. 8; K. Jackson 1985: chap. 8). Sam Bass Warner, Jr., describes the suburban resistance to being swallowed by Boston in the late nineteenth century: “Opponents of annexation countered with the ideal of small town life: the simple informal community, the town meeting, the maintenance of the traditions of rural New England. They held out to their audience the idea of the suburban town as refuge from the pressures of the new industrial metropolis” (1962: 164).²⁹ The argument for local control over smaller, less developed, and more cohesive communities resonated widely, and as a result most central cities today find themselves hemmed in by the incorporation of surrounding areas as separate and distinct political entities. The number of general purpose municipal governments in each of America’s urbanized areas increased significantly as a result. What impact has the fragmentation of metropolitan regions had on local civic engagement and identity? When a suburban area incorporates as a municipal jurisdiction, it permanently fixes its existence as a distinct community, a community with an identity and interests juxtaposed to the central city as well as its suburban neighbors. The autonomy that it acquires is both the driving force behind suburbanization and a defining characteristic of suburbia. As Michael Danielson states in his classic work *The Politics of Exclusion*, “Suburbia is essentially a political phenomenon. Political independence is the one thing that increasingly diversified settlements beyond the city limits have in common” (Danielson 1976: 27). Jurisdictional fragmentation thus narrows the political identity of suburbanites—their community is not the whole metropolitan region but rather their town’s slice of it. That slice is often far from representative of the region as a whole.

As with the propagation of homeowners associations, the increase in the number of jurisdictions creates more opportunity for political participation: additional entry points, an abundance of political positions filled by election and appointment. In 1992, around half a million people held elective office at the local level in America.³⁰ However, as already noted, local voting rates are notoriously low—some elections draw only single-digit percentages of the electorate. The rule of thumb is that the lower the level of election, the lower the turnout. One study shows voting rates averaged around 31 percent in cities over 25,000 between 1962 and 1975 (compared with an average rate of 59 percent for national elections during the same period) (Morlan 1984: 461).³¹ The number of candidates competing for office has also declined; upon occasion the lack of candidates has led to the cancellation of uncontested elections.³²

One possible explanation for low turnout is the “reformed” institutional structures that are typical among suburban governments.³³ (Reformers, seeking to take politics out of city administration, advocate for a move away from patronage to civil service, from ward-based to more at-large elections, from partisan to nonpartisan ballots, from elections concurrent with state and national election days to off-cycle elections, and from an elected mayor to an appointed city manager.)³⁴ After an extensive study of the reform movement in the Southwest, Amy Bridges concluded that the old style political machines displaced by reform were “a veritable school of politics for working-class and minority voters, compared with big-city reform” (Bridges 1997: 216; see also Jones-Correa 2000: 137; and Erie 1988).

Although it is difficult to determine what effect each reformed institutional structure has on civic engagement, the existing research shows a decidedly negative impact (Wood 2002; Hajnal and Lewis 2003; Alford and Lee 1968; Karnig and Walter 1983). The uncoupling of the timing of local elections from state and national elections may do the most to suppress participation: not only are voters given less of an incentive to make the effort to vote, but they may also begin to suffer from a form of election fatigue if asked to go to their polling places too frequently.³⁵

The reform movement’s desire to professionalize service provision and insulate it from partisan politics also contributed to the formation of novel governmental structures dedicated to a specific purpose such as the provision of water, sewers, recreation, or fire protection.³⁶ These special districts or authorities, whose numbers have exploded from 8,299 in 1942 to 35,052 in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000: 299; and 2002), supplant part of the traditional role of general purpose governments. Once formed, they can act on behalf of private interests, such as developers seeking infrastructure improvements, with very little democratic oversight (N. Burns 1994: 25).

The lack of democratic oversight is all but ensured due to the exceedingly low level of public awareness of special districts. Their existence is seldom publicized, taxes used to support them are often collected by the county, and

their borders rarely overlap or coincide with municipal boundaries. Nancy Burns argues that special districts “discourage participation because . . . the information costs associated with learning even the names of the districts that govern a location are prohibitive” (1994: 116). Special districts render the structure of local government even more complex and confusing, frustrating people’s attempts to understand and influence local public policy. Voting rates in special district elections (when they occur at all) prove the point: turnout averages less than 5 percent. Moreover, their elections—like those of homeowners associations—are not required to be broadly democratic; they may even limit the franchise to property holders. In sum, special districts seem to have failed in the reform-minded goal of taking the politics out of local government, while they also help foil popular control of government.

Beyond the effects of institutional structure, the jurisdictional fragmentation inherent in suburbanization shapes identities and limits civic engagement in other ways as well. Dahl recognizes that larger places confront more compelling or salient issues, which draw more people into politics (Dahl 1967).³⁷ Some problems can only be addressed by large units of government due to the geographical scope of the problem and the need for broad cooperation. Metropolitan areas split into a multitude of jurisdictions have a difficult time of dealing effectively with regional issues such as transportation, planning, and environmental protection. Jurisdictional fragmentation limits the capacity of local governments for cooperation, creating a competitive environment and often encouraging “beggar-thy-neighbor” policies. The local political agenda is constrained and shaped by these fragmenting structures.

Paul Peterson explains why fragmentation takes certain policies off the table: local governments that seek to provide more generous public services have no control over the out-migration of persons and businesses who are needed to contribute to the local tax base. Fragmented metropolitan regions may enjoy certain benefits: competition among jurisdictions may improve government performance and public services. But governments in fragmented areas must also worry about holding onto their municipality’s tax base. As a result, they are less likely to pursue purely redistributive policies: they fear that programs that assist poor people pose the danger of attracting the poor and repelling the wealthy whose dollars would pay for the programs (Peterson 1981).

Despite these concerns, jurisdictional fragmentation has its defenders, most notably, scholars of “public choice” economics. They praise fragmented metropolitan regions for forcing efficiency in governmental operations through competition and innovation.³⁸ Charles Tiebout, the political economist who pioneered this view, argued that fragmented metropolitan regions can be viewed as acting like a marketplace with municipalities offering different mixtures of tax and spend policies and “consumer-voters . . . picking that community which best satisfies his preference patterns for public goods” (Tiebout 1956: 418).

To the extent that “Tiebout sorting” actually occurs, it would likely further depress levels of political participation. The last political expression required of an individual would be the vote with his or her feet to enter the preferred jurisdiction. In a community of like-minded citizens, one could easily rely on the engagement of others. The cost of free-riding is significantly reduced in a homogeneous setting where satisfaction is high and contentious positions get no traction. If such politically motivated relocations were widespread, we would also expect to find political polarization within metropolitan areas with jurisdictional boundaries overlapping political preferences. We may see some of this occurring—the suburbs as a whole have long been perceived as diverging from center cities in terms of support for social welfare spending (see Edsall and Edsall 1992). Juliet Gainsborough probed this conventional wisdom using empirical data and found that compared with their urban counterparts, suburbanites are “more likely to identify as Republicans and vote for Republican candidates, and less likely to support federal government spending, particularly on redistributive programs,” even after holding relevant socioeconomic characteristics constant (Gainsborough 2001: 136). As political commentator William Schneider explains, “A major reason people move out to the suburbs is simply to be able to buy their own government. These people resent it when politicians take their money and use it to solve other people’s [i.e., the inner-city poor] problems, especially when they don’t believe that government can actually solve those problems” (W. Schneider 1992: 37).³⁹

We need to consider carefully the “pluses and minuses” of the sort of jurisdictional fragmentation that characterizes much of America’s metropolitan landscape, and the population sorting that it has facilitated. We will return to those issues after examining more closely the third defining element of American suburbia—internal homogeneity within a diverse metropolitan region—as well as the nature of suburban sorting.

Suburban Sorting and Homogeneity—Real and Imagined

American suburbs are stereotyped as homogeneous places with row upon row of indistinguishable tract houses, nationally franchised restaurants, chain stores in nearly identical shopping malls, and residents preoccupied with real estate values and the quality of local schools. This characterization, however, misses the truth. Suburbs are not all the same. Social scientists have long been pointing out how wrong it would be to think of suburbs as all lily-white, middle- and upper-class bedroom communities with large, single-family detached houses on spacious lots surrounded by white picket fences. As far back as the early 1960s, scholars recognized substantial differences among suburban types after observing that some suburbs were becoming centers of significant employment. The existence of these suburbs, which had jobs for their own residents and even attracted workers from neighboring jurisdictions, shattered

the traditional notion that suburbs constitute mere dormitories for workers who commute into central cities during the work week (Schnore 1963).

This new breed of suburbs possesses residences, commercial establishments, places of employment, and opportunities for entertainment; they are essentially their own self-contained cities. Joel Garreau (1991) dubs these new urban forms “edge cities,” while Robert Fishman (1987) calls them “technoburbs.” Whatever they are called, these places take the “sub” out of suburb—they are neither subordinate nor inferior to the city they are located near; they are not an outlying part of someplace more central; they are, rather, a wholly complete entity unto themselves, perhaps closest to what Dahl envisioned. So in terms of form, suburbs range from prototypical bedroom communities filled with commuters to self-contained concentrations of homes, businesses, retail establishments, and entertainment that satisfy almost all their residents’ needs and desires.

Suburban differences extend beyond form to socioeconomics as well. Suburbia is not a uniform bastion of wealth and privilege, and poor people are not confined to inner-city slums and run down shacks in the countryside. Almost half of all those living below the poverty line reside in suburbs (Berube and Frey 2005: 120). The poverty rate in the suburbs of the nation’s 102 largest metropolitan areas stands at 8.3 percent (Berube and Frey 2005: 114). After a review of census 2000 data, demographers William Frey and Alan Berube of the Brookings Institution note, “The fact that a growing share of the nation’s poor lives in the suburbs underscores the increasing range of incomes in the suburbs, as well as the growing racial, ethnic, household, and age diversity to be found there” (Berube and Frey 2005: 121).

Indeed, the census data show that beyond their economic inequalities the suburbs are increasingly differentiated along racial and ethnic lines (Gainsborough 2001: 35–47). Minorities are moving out from central cities, and some immigrants are bypassing the traditional gateway cities and moving directly to the suburbs (Singer 2005: 57).⁴⁰ As a result of these trends, the suburban African American population increased by 38 percent between 1990 and 2000, while the number of Hispanics and Asian Americans in the suburbs grew by 72 and 84 percent respectively (Logan 2003: 248). As of the 2000 census, minorities constituted 27.3 percent of the suburban population in the nation’s largest 102 metropolitan regions—almost half of the minorities living in these metro areas resided in the suburbs (Frey 2003: 155).

It is clear, then, that there are no uniform suburban expanses outside the central cities. But while great diversity is present in suburbia as a whole, particular suburban communities are often highly unequal and segregated: the demographics within particular suburban jurisdictions tend to be relatively homogeneous compared with the larger metropolitan region. The fragmented nature of metropolitan areas seems to facilitate economic stratification and to allow for persisting racial segregation. As urban sociologist John R. Logan

notes, "Minority segregation and isolation have increased in the suburbs during the 1990s as suburbs have become more diverse" (2003: 246). Another analysis of the 2000 census data found that "economic segregation among municipalities [in the fifty largest metropolitan regions] has risen" (Swanstrom et al. 2006: 145).⁴¹ As Macedo et al. point out, "Across the patchwork of suburban jurisdictions, individual suburbs are likely to be characterized not by integration and diversity but by residential segregation and homogeneity" (2005: 75). Scholars such as Myron Orfield (2002) have sought a "new suburban typology" to characterize and sort suburbs according to affluence and fiscal soundness, the presence or absence of jobs and services, the degree of racial segregation and class stratification, and other dimensions of relative well-being.

That suburbs differ markedly from one another with respect to wealth, racial profile, and other factors is clear. Just what this sorting of the population through suburbanization means for the political identity and civic engagement of suburbanites is something we now need to consider.

The Pluses and Minuses of the Great Sorting Machine

How should we assess the various developments we have described? In some ways, the suburban form offers a response to the problem of scale, or a growing population. Cities often appear to be too big and diverse to be politically manageable. Suburbs are not only smaller but also more homogeneous, and for those reasons they may be more conducive to civic engagement. But are suburbs really a democratic response, or do they undermine democratic civic life in the United States?

The changes have been complex, effects can be difficult to trace, and the overall picture is often ambiguous. The principal changes have been neither all good nor all bad. To further clarify the picture, more systematic survey evidence and also closer ethnographic studies will be useful. We think it worth highlighting the civic costs of these changes because the pathologies can only be addressed when their possible causes are identified.

The great migration to the suburbs was associated with increasing wealth and prosperity. The scale and amenities of middle-class suburban homes represent a great advance in comfort for ordinary people, and that fact should not be ignored. Most people surveyed say they prefer suburban single-family detached housing, but of course these preferences have been shaped by the cultural patterns surveyed above; and what people say they want is not always good for them, nor for society as a whole. There are other forms that improved homes and neighborhoods might have taken.

Higher levels of wealth and schooling might have been expected to lead to higher levels of political and civic participation, but in fact they have not.⁴² Americans' attitudes have become more tolerant, and they express greater

principled support than in the past for many basic liberties and forms of equality. But the form of suburban life seems to contribute to lower civic engagement in some respects, and American suburbanization has contributed to greater economic stratification and persisting racial segregation. Suburban sorting allows better-off Americans to dissociate themselves from others: it allows for the creation of political communities that are in important respects like private exclusive associations. Some degree of residential and educational sorting occurs in all advanced countries. In the United States, the nexus of heavy reliance on local property taxes, along with local community control over zoning and schools, has made for a local politics that often revolves around class and race-based exclusion and the defense of special privileges. One important casualty is educational equality of opportunity, which becomes virtually impossible to achieve when student peer groups differ as widely as they do between, say, suburban and inner-city Los Angeles, or between Long Island and New York City (see Macedo 2003: 743–55).

Many social scientists—especially economists and scholars of “public choice” political economy—have defended the fragmented suburban pattern based on the choices it allows citizen-consumers. Competition among suburban jurisdictions should encourage greater efficiency and a closer matching of preferences and baskets of public services. But there is little evidence of differing tax and service preferences among citizens. What most people seem to want are high-quality services and amenities and low taxes. Both can be achieved when the wealthy flock together and exclude the rest. A big problem with “Tiebout sorting” is that the ability to choose where to live depends upon wealth. The wealthy live where they wish, and the poor live where they must. The fact that the wealthiest have the readiest “exit” options means that they must be listened to. The capacity of local communities to engage in progressive policies is highly constrained.

Fragmentation and decentralization mean that small communities will be created, with some being based on a very high price of admission. Wider regional problems will tend to be ignored. Poorer communities will be left to deal with their own problems—problems made far more severe on account of the local concentration of disadvantages—while the better-off hunker down to enjoy their advantages in Tieboutian anti-republics. The local consensus and relative harmony that reign in advantaged local communities is based on ultimately undemocratic dynamics of exclusion. The well-off have an incentive to keep governance and public resources local, while the less advantaged will press to have matters moved up to a higher and more encompassing level. This is consistent with the basic partisan political dynamic of the last forty years in the United States, in which Republicans have prospered by running against federal activism, and for keeping government and taxes close to home.

What are the prospects for fundamental reform and improvement? Not es-

pecially good. Powerful vested interests line up behind the basic contours of the current system. The greatest financial asset of many Americans is their home, and home values (along with the quality of local schools) depend on the success of the politics of local exclusion.

All we have done here is to draw attention to some features of a troubling antidemocratic dynamic empowered in part by the structures of local political fragmentation. Tocqueville was right to praise the politically educative effects of local communities, but he did not foresee the degree to which the great sorting machine of local politics would foster disparities that pit the interests of the best-off against the good of the whole.

Chapter 6

Urbanizing the San Juan Fiesta

Civil Society and Cultural Identity in the Barrios of Caracas

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“Que venga, que venga, que venga la policia. Que no me tengo miedo” (Let them come, let them come, let the police come. I don’t have no fear). The chant came from a group of residents celebrating the popular religious fiesta of San Juan in a sector known as Las Casitas in the Caracas parish of La Vega. The predominantly black and mestizo barrio residents suffer constant harassment by the metropolitan police, known locally as the “Metropolitana.” Just a week earlier, the Metropolitana had pursued three barrio youth up into Las Casitas, killing the youth and injuring innocent bystanders. But in popular neighborhoods such as La Vega, residents have retaken the predominantly rural genre of the religious fiesta as a form of protest against intimidation and reaffirmation of black identity. The diverse crowd that night in Las Casitas included young black teenagers, middle-aged women with babies, wide-eyed little kids, and even the local *borrachos* (drunks), all pressed tightly into a circle around a group of young men beating on large handmade drums known as *cumaco* and *culo e’ puya*. One teenage boy with dreadlocks and wiry arms executed complex riffs on a drum to whoops of appreciation. A slender girl and her partner undulated their hips rapidly in a close and sensual embrace, as others looked on in admiration. *Que venga, que venga*. The collective chanting produced a tangible sense of invincibility, defiance, and strength in community.

While broader society stigmatizes marginalized black youth as *malandros* (delinquents), in the intimate setting of the fiesta they are part of a community that values them for their skills and gives them a sense of history and belonging. In barrios across Caracas, residents have begun to reorganize popular fiestas as new sites of political agency in a contemporary era. In the early years of the new millennium, this movement flourished and fiestas came to be celebrated in over forty barrios and sectors of the twenty-two parishes of Caracas. The fiestas have been important vehicles for the expression of black identity in the barrios, particularly given the new geographies of racial inequality and exclusion within Venezuelan society.

In this chapter, I argue that the cultural underpinnings of urban social movements help constitute grounds from which actors define themselves and their projects as distinct from both state institutions and the predominantly middle-class sectors of a self-identified civil society. The refashioning of discourses of blackness, slavery, and historical memory in the last decade coincides with the increasing political presence of marginalized sectors, as they make demands for redistribution, access to resources and services, and desire to participate in governance. But in comparison to traditional kinds of rights-based mobilization, *barrio* residents in Caracas are creating alternative forms of sociability that involve culture as a crucial terrain of definition and redefinition.

In Caracas, there has been a marked resurgence in popular politics couched in the language of identity and locality. The 1989 street riots known as the *Caracazo* catalyzed a series of alternative collective and localized responses to the atomizing effects of neoliberal structural adjustment policies of the eighties. The crisis of traditional political institutions and growing social discontent took on symbolic form with the failed 1992 coup by radical military leader Hugo Chávez. The coup sparked the imagination of broad layers of poor and marginalized groups in the *barrios* and spurred on a process of political organizing and cultural activism at the local level that continued until Chávez won the general elections in December 1998 and beyond.

The election of Chávez and the increasing participation of marginalized sectors in politics have given rise to a series of conflicts and contestations over national belonging, citizenship, exclusion, and public space. Central to these contestations is the concept of civil society. Opposition groups, consisting of business organizations such as *Fedecámaras* and the official trade union group, *Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela* (CTV, Confederation of Venezuelan Workers), as well as middle-class citizens' organizations and lobby groups, have proclaimed themselves at the head of a nascent civil society that resists the encroachments of the state, as embodied in the Chávez government. Opposition leaders and the mainstream media equate *Chavistas*, as the political followers of Chávez, with criminals. The urban poor are denigrated as lumpen (*lumpen*), hordes (*hordas*), and delinquents (*malandros*). In response, urban residents take on cultural identities that create new bonds based on culture and class. In the religious celebrations of Cruz de Mayo and San Juan, residents of the *barrios* build links to an imagined collective past based on histories of exclusion from the public sphere.

In this chapter, I show the ways in which the media and middle-class professional groups have sought to represent their opposition movements and the exclusionary basis on which they construct civil society. I go on to sketch the outlines of alternative publics as conceived in the fiesta of San Juan. I show the tensions that emerge as these publics assert their claims on state power and the contradictions that they face as they encounter the neoliberal logics

of cultural institutions. An ethnographic approach can help to convey the creativity and vitality of these new political spaces that are not reducible to or easily comprehended by traditional categories of politics.

Narratives of Civil Society in Chávez's Venezuela

As state-society relations have undergone a series of transformations in recent decades, the term *civil society* has entered public discourse in an unprecedented way. Jean and John Comaroff (2000) compare the contemporary reemergence of the idea of civil society with its popularity during the second half of the eighteenth century, when society also faced dramatic transformations in the organization of production, labor, and the market; shifts in the connections between economy and polity; and challenges to the ontological core of humanity. The eighteenth-century formulation of civil society proposed a measure of control over autocratic government, which should be exercised by an empowered citizenry. In its neoliberal guise, argue the Comaroffs, civil society has come to stand for society against the state, it is often synonymous with private enterprise or the market, and it is invested in an abstract community as the agent of collective action. More specifically, it is a legitimating discourse for neoliberal rule (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006: 4). Similarly in Venezuela, neoliberal discourse equated the concept of civil society and civic freedom with freedom of the market or "private initiative" (Lander 1995: 48). Once Chávez came to power on an anti-neoliberal platform, self-proclaimed civil society groups denounced the interventionist action of the state in the economy as a threat to democracy. But unlike other places, where civil society was also a polyvalent construct capable of supporting various kinds of popular mobilizations, in Venezuela it became an exclusionary category, reserved for the middle and upper classes.

In the private media, the term "civil society" is most commonly used to describe those groups who are in opposition to the government, including business groups, opposition political parties, trade unions, and citizens' groups. In an interview in the private daily newspaper *El Nacional* (2001), Pedro Carmona, president of Fedecámaras and leader of the 2002 coup, was asked the following question: "Will Fedecámaras continue coordinating the forces of civil society, for example the CTV?" This question reveals a conception of civil society as consisting of various sectors under the leadership of the business sector and is equated with corporatist entities such as the official trade union. In another article, civil society is defined broadly as "religious civil organizations, political parties, and universities" (*El Nacional* 2002a) and in one article it is strongly identified with the mass media (*El Nacional* 2002b). This vague and nebulous usage of "civil society" points to a deeper agenda; as Elías Iturrieta (2000) has noted, it refers to "a special class of Venezuelans who are not party militants, not members of trade unions, and not residents

of the barrios.” That is, as compared to being a neutral term that describes a particular relationship to state and economy, “civil society” is a racially and class-specific term that describes the ideological project of an elite sector.

In comparison, according to this particular narrative, community and political groups associated with the Chávez government do not belong to civil society for their overtly political character. Journalist Romero Barboza (2000) differentiates “civil society” from what he refers to as “political society,” which is “constituted by organizations with political ends, oriented toward the attainment of political power to implement policy.” For instance, the Círculos Bolivarianos (Bolivarian Circles), as units of popular community organization associated with the government, are not seen as civil society because of their *political* orientation. According to sociologist Roberto Briceño León (2001), “The Bolivarian Circles are not civil society, but rather a political organization, the arm of a political party where to be involved you have to share their political orientation. They are more of a political party than an organization of society.” According to this narrative, civil society should be concerned only with influencing policy (Barboza 2000), and acting as a pressure group (Fernández 2003), but not assuming and exercising political power.

Many Venezuela scholars and social commentators have addressed the ways in which the civil society concept is constructed as an exclusionary discourse in the contemporary mass media in Venezuela.¹ Dominant media representations form part of a historical set of racially motivated distinctions that seek to eliminate Indian and black culture and history as a threat to the nation. Political leaders with African, mestizo, and indigenous features are openly ridiculed in the mainstream media, using highly racialized depictions. In one cartoon that appeared in the daily newspaper *El Universal* on March 3, 2002, President Chávez is depicted as a monkey, evoking the most banal and crude stereotypes about people of African descent. Chávez’s full lips and broad nose are accentuated in the cartoon and he is shown in his regalia of the presidential uniform, but with the body of a monkey. In each of the three representations he jumps, screeches, and covers his eyes and ears, associating his supposedly juvenile political conduct with his racial background. This kind of debasing stereotype has been used repeatedly in the media to refer to Chávez, and to his nonwhite ministers. For instance, in another cartoon that appeared in the supplement *El Camaleón* of the daily *El Nacional* on January 11, 2002, the black minister of education, Aristóbulo Istúriz is depicted next to a monkey. The caption to the image reads, “The new minister next to his new administrator. (Aristóbulo is the one on the right).” After the 2002 coup when Pedro Carmona was briefly installed in power, Istúriz was said to have taken refuge in a cage in the local zoo (Jaimes Quero 2003: 180).² The marginalized majority, particularly those who support Chávez, are also consistently denigrated as scum (*chusma*) and mobs (*turbas*). In the mass media in Venezuela, the term “civil society” defines those groups of citizens who are legitimately

able to participate in politics, and it renders the rest, mostly the poor, black, indigenous, and marginal majority as noncitizens who should not have rights in the public sphere.

These racially motivated distinctions have their origins in Venezuela at the moment of colonization. The fear of blacks, mestizos, and indigenous people that lay at the roots of elite-driven Latin American nationalist projects in the anticolonial era has come to constitute deep collective fears in the contemporary context. Dating back to the catastrophic currency devaluation of “Black Friday” in February 1983, and continuing with the rise of Chávez and the coup of 2002, racist stereotypes have formed part of a more concerted effort to disqualify lower classes from political participation and effectively to deny them citizenship (Herrera Salas 2004). In a broader global context, this racist and exclusionary language is related to an intensified moment of neoliberalism structured by the war on terror that has redrawn the boundaries of civilization and barbarism. The events of September 11 compounded the anxieties of elite classes in Venezuela, further mobilizing racist myths in favor of a separation between the “civilized” middle and upper classes and the “barbaric” masses (Contreras 2006: 62). The label of terrorist or barbarian took on new global political meanings. Activist organizations are criminalized as a way of justifying their exclusion, like Joseba Zulaika’s example in this volume of the Basque ETA, who were labeled as terrorists by the Spanish government of José María Aznar.

Local Fiestas in the Formation of Cultural Community

Given the appropriation of the civil society concept by an elite group in Venezuela, popular organizations and community groups in the barrios have tended to self-exclude from identifying with it. At a popular assembly in the parish 23 de Enero in July 2004, a professor from the Central University of Venezuela (Universidad Central de Venezuela, UCV) was addressing the audience and he asked rhetorically, “Where is civil society?” One community organizer in the audience stood up and answered, “Chacao pa’ alla,” from Chacao onward, indicating the east of the city, mainly inhabited by middle- and upper-class residents. His comment was greeted with laughter and spontaneous applause by the audience, showing that there is a popular sense that civil society is not found in the forms of organization of residents of the barrios in the west of Caracas.

The celebration of popular festivals in the barrios of Caracas are an important form of cultural expression through which communities reappropriate public space, emphasize their commonality, and construct imagined communities as the basis for urban popular movements. The main festivals celebrated in the barrios are the Velorio de la Cruz de Mayo in May, fiesta de San Juan in June, Diablos Danzantes in May and June, and the fiesta de San Pedro in

June. Since these fiestas originate in rural areas and are linked to the agricultural cycle, they mainly cluster around the rainy season, which lasts from around May through to August (García and Duysens 1999: 62). Urban communities separated from their rural roots appropriate popular traditions as a way of expressing the realities and experiences of urban life, while imagining their origins in a rural past, slavery, and the African diaspora (Barrios et al. 1988). In the contemporary period, cultural identity is linked with popular protagonism and it is the idiom through which communities make claims on resources and public space.

The cult of San Juan, celebrated in the fiestas of Cruz de Mayo and San Juan, is one of the most popular of the fiestas among urban residents in Caracas. San Juan, like the other festivals, can be traced back to the period of colonization. As David Guss (1993: 453) recounts, Saint John's Day, a church festival celebrated six months before Christmas, was the only day of the year when slaves were permitted to gather freely, dance, and play drums. The slaves accepted the Catholic saint John the Baptist, or San Juan, but they incorporated their own African rites and rituals.

Most scholars have seen the fiesta of San Juan as speaking to both power and resistance. On the one hand, religious fiestas in Venezuela were strongly shaped by interactions with the colonizer. The creation of coherent religious systems like *Santería* in Cuba and *Candomblé* in Brazil was not possible in Venezuela due to the strict censuring of African and indigenous practices and imposition of Christianity (Pollak-Eltz 1992). Saint John the Baptist was seen by the colonizers and the Catholic Church as the bringer of civilization who would redeem heathen souls (García and Duysens 1999: 15). The figure of San Juan that is worshipped today in religious festivals is blond and blue-eyed, reflecting the denial of color and the strength of the myth of *mestizaje* (the mixing of races) (Guss 2000: 56). On the other hand, the popular cult of San Juan Congo bears strong traces of black influence and existed as an alternative countercultural movement within colonial society. Various scholars of Africa and the African diaspora have theorized this reconstitution of African-derived cultures as "creolization" (Mintz and Price 1976), "syncretism" (Comaroff 1985), and more recently as "innovation" (Brown 2003). In Venezuela, the slaves accepted San Juan, but they incorporated ancestral drums and African spirits such as *malembe* (García and Duysens 1999: 15). While the cult of San Juan reveals the partial acceptance of Catholic belief systems of moral purity and civilization, it has also functioned as a powerful symbol of cultural resistance and transformation for marginalized communities.

Celebrating San Juan in the Parish of San Agustín

In the urban context, the festivals of Cruz de Mayo and San Juan have been historically linked to the parish San Agustín, where Totoño and his father

brought the tradition in 1982. During the month of May, residents in the barrios celebrate the Cruz de Mayo, or Cross of May. On May 31, there is a celebration to mark the ending of the Cruz de Mayo and the beginning of the San Juan festivals. In 2004, I attended this celebration in San Agustín, known as the Velorio of the Cruz de Mayo. We arrived in San Agustín at 11 P.M. at the historic square “El Afinque de Marín,” where the fiesta was to take place. The altar was decorated with brightly colored flags and crosses. In the background, the mural of the original members of the historic musical group from San Agustín Grupo Madera was illuminated by soft lights. And all over the Afinque, the laughter and chatter of the black youth with their hip-hop gear, cornrow braids, and dreadlocks gave the scene a sense of both deep historical connectedness and urban contemporary reality. Devotees of the cross stood at the altars, singing songs to the mounted crosses, while the youth passed around cans of beer and soft drinks.

There was anticipation and excitement in the air, and at the same time a certain sense of apprehension. A large shiny white jeep of the Metropolitana circled the Afinque repeatedly, as if to assert its presence. Participants explained to me that the Metropolitana had a history of harassing and intimidating barrio residents during festivals, but that it had become more serious during 2003 and 2004, when the opposition-identified city mayor Alfredo Peña was in power. At least twice the previous year the Metropolitana had shown up at festivals and fired shots into the air to scare people. This evening the people were addressed by community leaders who said they had word that the Metropolitana might show up again and try to intimidate the crowd, but that people should not panic, as the police just wanted to demonstrate their power and authority to break up the fiesta. That evening there were no incidents with the police, other than their continual surveillance, but to the police and the outside world the fiesta clearly represents the kind of black threat and mob frenzy previously referred to in articles from mainstream newspapers. Local leaders realized the importance of standing up to the police, as a sign of community strength and power.

At midnight, or just before, I went with a group of barrio residents looking for the figure of San Juan, which was hidden in one of the houses of the barrio. Nobody is told in advance where San Juan will be hidden, only the organizers and the house owner know. We walked up and down the old cobblestone streets and past the elongated, colonial-style houses of the barrio Marín in a procession led by a large white and red flag until we came to the house, and when we entered there was a statue of San Juan, dressed in a gold cape and hat and bearing a cross. After singing several songs to San Juan around an altar, the procession made its way back to the Afinque. There was a brief mock struggle as the Cruz de Mayo devotees resisted the entry of San Juan. But they gave way, and then people carried the San Juan statue, making *promesas* (promises), expressing their appreciation to San Juan for a favor they

have asked of him. Following this, the residents stood in a close circle for the *sangueo*—a dance in honor of San Juan—accompanied by the *batá* and *culo e' puya* drums. Around 4 A.M. they began the *perra*, an intense, fast style of dance and drumming, common to the eastern village of Curiepe. The importance of the drums and the overt sexuality of the dances differentiates the ritual from the Andean festivals of the south of Venezuela.

The San Juan fiesta is celebrated on June 24 with a daylong procession through the barrio, singing, dancing, and drumming. When I arrived at this event in San Agustín on June 24, 2004, the event was already in full swing. Men, women, and children led the procession down the main street of San Agustín, waving brightly colored flags that are said to purify the road ahead of them. Two young men, Alexander Arteaga and Raúl Britto, moved through the crowd offering people *aguardiente*, a liquor made from sugarcane, from bottles slung around their necks. In rural areas, the procession traditionally passes by the church so that San Juan can be blessed by the priest. But in the urban context, at times the priests refuse to bless San Juan or participate in the festival.

"Here we have an issue," Raúl told me, "when we go to the church the priests don't want to bless San Juan. Every year this happens."

Alexander added, "And today we had a mass because for months we've been requesting a mass for the saint, and we wanted to know why the priest didn't want to bless the saint."

"Why doesn't the church see this fiesta as part of the church?" I asked them.

"They say that this isn't part of the church but I've been to the church at times and they talk about San Juan," replied Raúl. "They say that this isn't a religious issue and that's why they can't bless San Juan. But it is a religious issue, it's the religion that we have."

"The priests have refused many times to do the mass for San Juan, in the Church of Fátima and of Nazaret," added Alexander.

"But San Juan has to be blessed by the priest, by God, because we go purifying the path, and we don't want problems with anyone," Raúl continued. "Anyway, San Juan was a man of the church, he was a baptist. We had to bring him [the San Juan statue] to the church and say, 'Please, give this damned guy some holy water, 'cause we're missing out on the party.' The priest thought it was a joke and it's not. This is a religion for us, that we love and respect. Why do they always reject us when we're working so hard?" Raúl asked. "Just because we're in the center of Caracas, the heart of Caracas, why do they reject us? The president says, 'Nobody outdoes me' [*A mí no me mueve nadie*] and that's San Juan now. The police also want to dominate us, but they are very mistaken. Who thinks that they can stop the drums of San Agustín here?"

Alexander and Raúl appeal to the church for inclusion, mentioning the

status of San Juan within the Catholic hierarchy and desiring the purification that comes with the blessing of the church. In the rural setting, the church is more likely to accept and incorporate the fiesta of San Juan into its mass, but in the urban context this relationship is more contested. Along with the constant policing of the urban fiestas, these fiestas are also culturally rejected and excluded from dominant frames of religiosity. In contrast to the fiestas of San Juan in the eastern village of Curiepe, marketed and promoted as a folkloric celebration of national identity (Guss 2000: 37), the urban fiestas are denigrated by dominant classes as disorderly and potentially disruptive. Raúl draws on the associations of San Juan Bautista as “a man of the church, a baptist,” as a way of asserting the legitimacy of their religion. He also compares San Juan to Chávez in his determination to withstand the repeated onslaughts of the opposition. Just like Chávez, San Juan and “the drums of San Agustín” are symbols of their resistance and struggle in the face of discrimination and misunderstanding from the broader society.

The plan was to take San Juan up to the *cerro* (hillside shanties), and after people from the upper shantytowns had joined the group they would return to the Afinque for dancing and drumming in the evening. Alexander stated that, “San Juan will go up to the cerro, up into the hills, we will take over the cerro. . . . And we will keep purifying paths: the police won’t stop us as we go up and then come back down.” When the procession reached La Charneca, we stopped and the singing and dancing continued in large groups. Again, the fear that the police would stop the procession was palpable, and unfortunately the march was stopped, but not by the police. As the procession came down from the cerro it was confronted by the death of a young man, killed in a shootout in the path of the procession. A large crowd gathered around the body of the dead man and the dancing and singing stopped, as the police came to cordon off the area and an ambulance carried away the body. Later that evening in the Afinque there were no celebrations as on May 31, rather there was an air of gloom and despondency, as people shared alcohol and reflected on the sad events of the afternoon.

Cultural Institutions and the Popular Fiestas

While the metropolitan police represent one point of contact between barrio residents and a multilayered state apparatus, cultural institutions are another point where residents come into contact with the state. Since the period of national-populist democratic rule beginning in the late 1950s, cultural institutions have played a strong role in religious festivals. As Guss (1993: 456) recounts, beginning with Juan Liscano, who choreographed a five-day “folklore” performance in Caracas in 1946 with groups from around the country, followed by the “Culture Week” organized in Curiepe during the 1970s, the image of San Juan became the center of a new national identity and was pub-

licized to the country as a whole. Moreover, multinational tobacco companies such as the Cigarrera Bigott—a subsidiary of British American Tobacco—were important actors in defining how traditional and popular culture came to be performed (Guss 2000: 101). Cigarrera Bigott had set up the Fundación Bigott (Bigott Foundation), primarily as a philanthropic association designed to aid workers to finance their homes. During the nationalist years of the 1970s, as foreign-owned companies began to undergo nationalization, Bigott sought to associate itself with the sphere of national culture by sponsoring cultural initiatives and workshops. The groups that emerged from these cultural workshops, such as *Un Solo Pueblo* and *Madera*, were important forces in new projects of cultural renewal in the barrios (Guss 2000: 107–8). The revival of traditional music and dance in the barrios of Caracas today has its antecedents in attempts by Liscano and the Fundación Bigott to bring together groups from different regions.

An important shift took place during the 1990s, with the election of Carlos Andres Pérez and the neoliberal turn ushered in by his government. During this period, culture was resignified as a product or merchandise for consumption. As Yolanda Salas (2003: 162) argues, “the *pueblo*, the subject and actor of the popular, is substituted by the product that should be advertised via the mass media.” The “popular” was being transformed into the “consumer.” In a neoliberal climate of greater openness to foreign investors, private foundations were less interested in promoting national identity as a way to market themselves, and more direct about publicizing their products.

But the transition that took place was more than the resignification of culture as a commodity; as George Yúdice (2003: 11) argues, in a neoliberal era the field of culture itself becomes regulated by an economic rationality based on utility. Instrumentalized art and culture are actively recruited by states and foundations to improve social conditions, support civic participation, or spur economic growth. Along these lines, Pérez’s “Eighth Plan of the Nation” proposed to deal with poverty and create economic efficiency through deepening cultural development, as promoted by international foundations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. Under a section headed “The new strategy of cultural change,” the plan lists the nature and contributions of culture in development, including: “culture as a factor and means of development,” “harmonization of growth with social well-being,” “culture as a distinctive end of economic growth,” and “culture as a right and public service” (CORDIPLAN 1990: 13). Another policy released a few months later as the “Plan of Sociocultural Participation” proposed to “Develop a culture with strategic value, that is, one which permits a more positive insertion into social life and the field of labor” (Baptista and Marchionda 1992). As compared to culture as an end in itself, culture was increasingly seen in instrumental terms as a means for promoting economic growth and ameliorating social problems.

As state expenditures in the arts were reduced, private foundations like Bigott were given an expanded role to play in meeting these goals.

After Chávez was elected in 1998, cultural producers encountered conflicting rationalities that included both the use of culture for political gain and integration—especially as state financing of the arts was revitalized—and a utilitarian approach to culture as a resource to be invested in. Fiesta organizers countered these hybrid logics with alternative views of culture as a way of being that is linked to their everyday lives and religious cosmologies.

Cultural institutions under Chávez have sought to implement new policies that revitalized state financing of the arts, and at times they have encouraged a politicization of culture for patronage purposes. The Proyecto de Ley Orgánica de la Cultura (Project of the Organic Law of Culture, PLOC) was jointly designed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport and the Consejo Nacional de la Cultura (National Council of Culture, CONAC) in 2000. It established the approach of the Chávez government as contrary to dominant neoliberal models by increasing state patronage of culture and it highlighted the importance of the state in protecting and preserving cultural patrimony (PLOC 2000). The Chávez government has channeled oil revenues into the sponsorship of culture, making greater funds available to municipal governments. Local level councils such as Fundarte, the Foundation for Culture and the Arts of the Mayor of the Libertador Municipality, have played an increasingly important role in the funding and stimulation of cultural forms such as the urban fiestas.

The increase in state sponsorship for fiestas was visible between the 2004 and 2005 celebrations. During the San Juan festivities in San Agustín in July 2005, Raúl and the other members of the *cofradía* were outfitted in identical yellow T-shirts which read, “San Juan—San Agustín.” Although the T-shirts did not advertise the sponsor, they had been given by the Chavista city mayor, Juan Barreto. Fundarte had also contributed some resources toward the organization of the fiesta. The difference was notable from the previous year when opposition mayor Peña had been in power, and the fiestas had more of an oppositional and subversive nature. But despite accepting state support and wearing the T-shirts, barrio residents spoke about wanting to maintain the fiestas as religious events and not tools for partisan intervention. Raúl’s comments illustrate some of the ambivalences arising from state support: “Fundarte is with the proceso. It has always existed and has helped us, but at times we don’t want to politicize our culture and Fundarte is another institution of the government. Now we ourselves are the government, the people is the government, it is no longer Fundarte, or Freddy Bernal or Chávez, it is the people. . . . We don’t receive money from the state. And we don’t want the state to suddenly come and tell us they’re gonna give us millions of bolívares. No, this is culture, it is a religious issue, not political. We want the community to be united.” After many years of organizing the fiestas with scarce resources,

Raúl was concerned about the logics that state financing would introduce. He sees a symbiosis of interests between state and society under Chávez, yet he also wants to maintain the autonomy of culture from politicization, meaning intervention by partisan interests that could introduce divisions. Against a notion of culture as a tool for political integration, Raúl affirms its spiritual and religious dimensions.

These ambiguities of state funding for fiestas were also apparent at the National Meeting of Black Saints, directed by Williams Ochoa in June 2005. The mayor's office gave money to bring in groups from around the country for processions and seminars in barrio Carmen of La Vega, as well as for a large concert in the Plaza O'Leary, where various groups gave short presentations to the crowd. The event at Plaza O'Leary was reminiscent of Liscano's staged events, with the fiesta as a spectacle for consumption. This staging of fiestas was reintroducing the idea of the artist as performer, of having a separate stage, and of paying the artist. In local fiestas—as a local community activist, Freddy Mendoza, told me—“drummers are not seen as artists, they are part of the community who produce music . . . the artist is not distinct from the community.” The performers and the audience at the O'Leary concert felt uncomfortable with the format, and some groups called for getting rid of the stage, saying that this is a religious ritual, not a public concert. Finally, in the last performance by the San Juaneros from Caracas, audience members climbed up onto the stage and everyone joined in the singing, disrupting the pedagogy of the event as spectacle. Then the *tambores* were brought out into the crowd, and the audience broke up into small circles with people dancing and drumming.

Increased state funding under Chávez promoted the idea of culture as a tool for national cohesion and political integration; it also disrupted the neoliberal notion that culture should be privatized and commercialized. But at the same time, the field of culture continued to be oriented toward foreign and private investment. According to Title 5 of the PLOC, “With the goal of incorporating private investment as a substantial source of financing, it [the law] establishes a regime of fiscal incentives in agreement with the principles, criteria and procedural norms envisioned in Chapter II” (PLOC 2000). Early on in the Chávez administration, relationships were established between cultural institutions and corporations. In October 1999, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport signed an agreement with the Fundación Bigott, offering technical assistance to specialist instructors working in the areas of traditional dance and music. Over 1,200 instructors were funded to travel across the country holding culture workshops. Each workshop cost 1–1.5 million bolívars (Salas 2003: 167–68). In 2000, the director of Bigott, Antonio López Ortega was appointed to the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport. Bigott, along with the Central Bank of Venezuela, the Fundación Polar, and the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF) lobbied for the formulation and ap-

proval of a law of *mecenazgo* [patronage for the arts], to provide fiscal incentives for private companies to invest in the arts. López Ortega argued his case in terms of the financial benefits of encouraging private investment, “The Law of Mecenazgo in Brazil, approved in 1993, has converted Brazilian culture industries into the second largest product for export in Mercosur” (cited in Calcaño, n.d.). These corporations pushed for the development of culture as an export industry and for its conversion into a profitable activity in Venezuela.

The orientation of the arts toward private investment has encouraged the prevalence of market-based calculations within state-sponsored programs. The utilitarian approach to culture as a service or product with the end of enhancing growth and development is clearly outlined in the PLOC. Article 133 of the law declares that: “The state, by way of the Cultural System of Culture, will promote the creation of Cultural Agencies, with the goal of increasing the offering of cultural goods and services and to promote economic growth” (PLOC 2000). As Yúdice (2003: 12–13) argues, the utilitarian idea of culture as a resource entails its management. There is a subordination of technicians to administrators, and artists are required to manage the social. Arts administrators as “managerial professionals” become intermediaries between funding sources and artists or communities. This technocratic management of culture by arts administrators can be observed in the policies and practices of cultural institutions under Chávez.

Under a “Plan of Cultural Funding,” the Chávez government created new administrative bodies to determine the allocation of resources for culture, the distribution of the population, the degree of importance of certain cultural traditions, and the areas that should be promoted (Wisotski 2006: 21). Although the idea is to democratize the sphere of culture, it continues to be managed and regulated by technocratic principles. In 2006, Fundarte had begun implementing a program known as “Joint Programming, Operative Plan of Diagnostic Revision.” I was present at a meeting at Fundarte on February 9, 2006, at which arts administrators came up with a list of their priorities for the organization of cultural activities in the barrios. These priorities included a census of possible facilitators in the barrios, raising the profile of these select facilitators, and building a local investigation team to study cultural practices, such as the fiestas. As Tania Murray Li (2007: 235) argues in the context of World Bank development programs in Indonesia, informal practices and relationships have to be rendered technical to prepare for an intervention. Experts must identify groups, enroll social forces, and then these groups could be funded, counted, legitimated, and replicated. As cultural practices and communities were rendered technical, they were also prioritized according to instrumental ends.

As they discussed how to proceed, some arts administrators at Fundarte argued that local leaders of the community should be able to come up with their own proposals and present proposals to Fundarte for funding, since the people

in the communities know their own necessities best. But others took a more paternalistic approach; one administrator said that Fundarte should create proposals on behalf of all the community groups, based on Fundarte's institutional diagnosis and line (*lineamiento*). "The fiestas in the communities are too general and undefined," she said. "They don't solve their necessities." This administrator's assessment of fiestas as "general" and "undefined" is another way of saying that they do not serve instrumental purposes, such as resolving the basic necessities of residents. Rather, according to this discourse, there is a need for expert diagnosis from the arts administrators to analyze how fiestas could be mobilized to ameliorate social conditions. The discussion reveals the intersection between neoliberal-technocratic discourses and what Tania Murray Li identifies as the "will to improve" that is present in all development interventions. Arts administrators are self-styled experts who presume to know better than local leaders what is good for the community.

Conclusion: Civil Society, Identity Politics, and Alternative Publics

The appeal to cultural identity by urban movements in the contemporary era contrasts with earlier national-populist movements that sought to celebrate the mixed-race roots of the nation and subsume cultural difference into national identity. Under successive military governments in Venezuela between the 1930s and 1950s, intellectuals and popular classes collaborated to integrate local traditions and histories into a national culture. As Daisy Barreto (1995a: 11) argues, symbols of national unity had to be fabricated in order to overcome local ethnic particularities and integrate the rural masses who migrated to urban centers. With the return to democracy in the 1960s in Venezuela and a new national-populist politics, heroic figures, cults, and images were defined as the unique heritage of the popular classes (Barreto 1995b: 66). But beginning in the 1980s, residents in the barrios began to retake popular fiestas as an expression of cultural identity.

The contemporary moment has seen the rise of barrio-based movements that link cultural identity to claims over public space, access to resources, recognition of land titles, and the right to participate in governance. Chávez's language of diversity and inclusion has provided novel repertoires of contestation. Fiesta organizers described their activities as defending public space from the gangs and the police. They invoked Chávez as a symbol of their rights to governance, while noting that their struggles predated him. The strategic uses of identity by barrio residents are different from identity politics in the United States. While in the United States, identity politics often involves organizing along racial and ethnic lines, defending one's own race or ethnic enclave, and competing with other enclaves for resources, in Latin America understandings of race have been more fluid, and notions of identity function more as a means of articulating a sense of shared marginality.

But as they sought to generate collective, emancipatory, and everyday visions of culture from within state-promoted cultural forms, urban movements came up against the contradictions of the state under Chávez. Although the Chávez government has revitalized state patronage of the arts, cultural institutions are still guided by neoliberal technocratic rationalities that emphasize culture as a resource, and the state has also attempted to use culture as a tool for political integration. In contrast to these logics, fiesta organizers and residents emphasized the spiritual dimensions of their cultural activities and fiestas as religious rituals and not public spectacles.

The situated nature of cultural identity for barrio residents also helped them to define their difference from a middle-class-identified civil society which had excluded them. While in other contexts, civil society has been paraded as a universal category—often masking economic interest and class privilege—in Venezuela it was revealed to be a class and racially specific concept marked by exclusion. The exclusion and self-exclusion of some marginalized sectors from Western-derived models such as civil society leads us to ask, following John and Jean Comaroff (1999: 20), what might Latin American hybrid public spheres look like? How can we understand what is outside of civil society, as it is narrowly constructed in Venezuela? How might we begin to theorize places formed by exclusion?—a question that Anne-Maria Makhulu and Sandhya Shukla also address in their contributions to this volume.

My description of the San Juan fiesta is an attempt to show the contours of one kind of cultural counterpublic that is emerging in the barrios of Caracas. This form of cultural expression has been shaped by discourses of civilization and *mestizaje*, as well as interactions with state cultural institutions and multinational corporations. But at the same time, it is through these cultural practices that citizens are articulating a new kind of politics that links cultural identity with protest against broader issues facing marginalized communities, such as police brutality and rights to political participation.

While most recent scholarship on Venezuelan civil society has provided important narrative accounts of the discourse of civil society, I suggest the need to supplement this with ethnographic research that is based in the cultural practices of the urban poor. Purely textual analyses reveal their limitations when it comes to understanding how working-class politics is being reconstituted under the conditions of neoliberalism. Meanwhile, social scientists have tended to focus on political parties and trade unions as the main sites of political organization, representation, and mediation. Many see the crisis of traditional political institutions as a crisis of democracy, without paying attention to the emergence of new forms of popular organization and representation such as cultural fiestas, murals, community radio stations, and barrio assemblies that are reinvigorating a nascent public sphere.

Given the paucity of academic frameworks for describing these institutions of popular politics, I have turned to ethnographic thick description to investigate

them. Javier Sanjinés (2001: 292) proposes we look at marketplaces, festivities, and rituals to see how a vibrant Indian urban culture in Bolivia formed the environment for the emergence of an alternative public sphere. Others in this volume such as Jane Goodman and Angelique Haugerud have also looked at performance and satirical protest as ways of constructing new subject positions and building political community. Ethnographic research has a crucial role to play in shifting the discussion of agency to the horizontal and regenerative forms of collaboration that are emerging in this contemporary era.

Chapter 7

Neoliberalism, Satirical Protest, and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign

ANGELIQUE HAUGERUD

Neoliberalism has sparked a stunning array of popular countermovements.¹ Playful costumes, street theater, colorful giant puppets, music, and a festive spirit enliven these protests. Political street theater and other nonformal “politics that doesn’t look like politics”² have a long history. Some contemporary protest styles continue the spirit of medieval carnival or “festivals of resistance,” or they evoke Brechtian tactics, the 1960s guerrilla theater of the Yippies, or the Bread and Puppet Theater activism of the 1960s and 1970s. During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, fair trade and debt relief for poor nations have attracted celebrity advocates such as Bono and have propelled hundreds of activist groups to join massive street demonstrations at political conventions and conferences of the World Trade Organization, Free Trade Area of the Americas, World Bank, and World Economic Forum. Such protests often target what Naomi Klein (2002) terms the “corporate hijacking of political power”—and consequent harm to the environment, human rights, democracy, and workers’ physical and financial vitality. Suddenly in the media spotlight, by the mid-1990s, were children working in factories producing soccer balls, young women locked inside sweatshops sewing clothes for brand-name designers, and multinational corporations colluding with violent dictatorships. While neoliberalism’s emphasis on civil rather than economic rights contributes to the vitality of identitarian movements in some parts of Latin America and Europe (as discussed by Albrow, Fernandes, and Zulaika in this volume), overall the 1990s saw renewed social movement interest in economic issues and struggles against inequality, and a relative decline in the number of organizations devoted to identity politics or ethnic issues (Edelman 2001: 286; N. Klein 2002; J. Smith 2004; Tilly 2004: 118).³ Indeed global anticorporate activism, Naomi Klein (2002: 336) observes, “is seeing a renewal unparalleled since the thirties.”

What this resurgent activism adds up to politically, empirically, or theoretically is disputed.⁴ However inchoate, decentered, or full of internal contradic-

tions these movements may be, they nonetheless have “shift[ed] the terrain of political organization away from traditional political parties and labour organizing,” David Harvey (2003: 168) suggests, and they draw strength from their relevance and embeddedness in the politics of daily life. Ironically, that embeddedness and its democratic potential are threats to which the neoliberal state often responds by “denying the very freedoms it is supposed to uphold” (Harvey 2005: 69). The political contradictions of neoliberalism include governing elites’ fear of majority rule and social movements, and limitations on democratic governance. Examples of the latter, Harvey suggests, include neoliberal elites’ reliance on “undemocratic and unaccountable institutions (such as the Federal Reserve or IMF) to make key decisions” (2005: 69).⁵

Neoliberalism is a potent term in both elite and popular political discourse (including slogans in street protest) in much of the world, although apart from some academic circles it is often unrecognized in the United States. But it is apt for describing the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In the United States the colloquial meanings of the term *liberalism* associate it with the political left and big government, while its classical meaning refers to guarantees for individual freedoms and dignity. Conservative advocates of what is now known in most of the world as neoliberalism argued that liberal values were more thoroughly guaranteed from sources outside the state—by free markets (i.e., disembedding capital from political and social constraints). Neoliberalism is a fundamentally conservative doctrine that underlies late twentieth- and early twenty-first century corporate globalization. Neoliberalism overlaps Bush-era neoconservatism in their common faith in the magic of the market as guarantor of freedom and well-being (see Harvey 2003 and N. Smith 2005). Neoconservatism in the United States differs from neoliberalism in its emphasis on a unified social order both at home and abroad, its reliance on moral arguments for presidential authority and military domination, and consequently—increasingly—its suppression of domestic dissent as unpatriotic, given its assumption that imperialism abroad will be bought at the cost of tyranny at home (or that the war on terror requires restrictions on civil liberties at home).⁶ The George W. Bush administration represents the joint triumph of neoconservatives and neoliberals. Current American neoconservatism, combined with globalized (but by no means uniform or inevitable) economic neoliberalism,⁷ fuels new forms of political coercion—and innovative forms of political resistance.

A revealing entry point into this lively oppositional domain is the Billionaires for Bush, a satirical political group known for innovative tactics, media appeal, and a theme that is one of the least welcome issues in American politics and in dominant neoliberal economic discourse—namely runaway economic inequality as a threat to democracy.⁸ This grassroots group’s signature tactic is ironic wordplay as they spoof the ultrarich. The Billionaires recast protest as play, a diversion from the everyday and an easing of tensions sometimes associated with protest (cf. Huizinga 1950).

While they had adopted the nonpartisan banner “Billionaires for Bush (or Gore)” during the 2000 presidential campaign, in 2004 they became Billionaires for Bush.⁹ Building on the experience of its smaller 1999 and 2000 precursor groups, the 2004 network Billionaires for Bush¹⁰ attracted wide media attention and grew rapidly from a few chapters to one hundred nationally and a handful abroad as well. In January 2004, the Billionaires won a spot among fifteen finalists selected from more than 1,500 contestants in a “Bush in 30 Seconds” ad competition sponsored by MoveOn.org. Their ad entry—“Leave No Billionaire Behind”—was a “message of appreciation to the millions of children paying for tax breaks for the rich” (according to their press release). They have a polished website and have produced music CDs, a book, T-shirts, bumper stickers, videos, and an infomercial (among other products). Their modest funding comes from sales of such products and from individual donations. Their musical troupe “The Follies” produced shows such as “Dick Cheney’s Holiday Spectacular.” In early 2008, the Billionaires turned out a widely viewed video spoof—“No, You Can’t”—that was mentioned in the *New York Times* and that featured a Dick Cheney look-alike and other Republican figures undercutting Barack Obama’s “Yes We Can” slogan. (The “No, You Can’t” video was a direct parody of a popular video featuring celebrities and Obama’s oratory that had been produced by the musician Will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas.)¹¹ At the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, dressed in pinstriped suits and black fedoras, the Billionaires posed as “Lobbyists for McCain” and carried placards declaring “No, you can’t!” and “Don’t Change Horsemen Mid-Apocalypse” and “Loyal to Big Oil.”¹² During the 2008 financial crisis, they appeared as Billionaires for Bush Bailouts at Wall Street protests, with slogans such as “Thanks for the \$700bn Check!” and “I’m Starving, Bail Me Out!” and “Billionaires for Bailouts *Love* Tax-Payers!”

Between April 2004 and late 2005 (and sporadically thereafter), I attended internal planning meetings of the Billionaires for Bush Manhattan chapter (the largest in their organization), as well as their street actions, and social and fund-raising events. I also spent time with their Seattle, Boston, and Washington, D.C., chapters, and I have interviewed chapter heads and members in other states. At the start of each of their internal planning meetings, where all who are present introduce themselves, I state that I am an anthropologist doing research on this group. At their public performances and street actions (where I identify myself as a researcher and visibly carry a tape recorder), I interview (usually on audiotape) spectators, members, journalists, and videographers. In addition, I have conducted dozens of private, in-depth interviews with members.

From their start in 1999, these satirical Billionaires advanced a reformist rather than radical agenda, focusing on electoral democracy versus corporate power and growing economic inequality. They urged campaign finance

reform (to counter threats to democracy posed by the expanding role of corporate and private money in politics), criticized excessive deregulation and privatization, and called attention to setbacks for the poor and middle class and other issues they believed neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party were addressing effectively. The name Billionaires for Bush (or Gore), cofounder Andrew Boyd writes, conveyed the organization's "two core messages: Big Money owns both candidates and both candidates are roughly the same" (2002a: 160). As a member remarked, theirs is "not the smash-the-system politics of the Yuppies in the 1960s," but rather "a politics of make America fairer, redistribute the wealth . . . make the American middle class viable, and vote George Bush out of office." This is an agenda for a more democratic, humane, and egalitarian capitalism. When they became Billionaires for Bush in 2004, they did so not because they were ardent supporters of John Kerry (indeed many were not) but because their priority was the defeat of George W. Bush. His defeat, they reasoned, would open political space for addressing the larger challenges noted above, which crosscut the boundaries of the two main political parties. The Billionaires have always been more nonpartisan than their 2004 name implies.

Most broadly, the notion of Bush's billionaires points to what John Gledhill (2004: 338) terms neoliberalism's "networks of 'shadow state' power behind the official institutional façade. . . . Not only is neoliberalism highly 'politicized,' but the most important part of the politics may lie backstage." Central to this politicized neoliberalism are "sovereign cliques" that, as Janine Wedel (2005) has pointed out, are not necessarily accountable to the public as they participate in social networks that mix state, business, and nongovernmental roles in resource allocation in ways that can undermine democracy. Indeed the boundary blurs between the state and corporate power, and "what remains of representative democracy is overwhelmed, if not totally though legally corrupted by money power" in the neoliberal state (Harvey 2005: 77–78).

The aim of Billionaires for Bush is not simply to bash the super-rich, or to reject neoliberalism's entrepreneurial subject or the varieties of individualism many Americans value. Instead it is to call attention to neoliberalism by portraying it as a destructive, runaway version of the pursuit of self-interest and to the potentially corrupt and excessive influence of money on democratic processes and the public good. These are delicate issues in the United States, however, and some political conservatives fight them rhetorically with labels such as "class warrior"—even though polls show that economic and social policy positions taken by activists so labeled often resonate with those of large majorities of the public.¹³ Substantial ideological work goes into attempts to marginalize opposition to economic neoliberalism, and to depict market outcomes as natural and inevitable, so that alternatives seem unimaginable (see also Bonnie Urcioli's analysis in this volume). Corporate news media often assist in those efforts, contributing to what Harvey (2005: 183) terms the "im-

poverished condition of contemporary public discourse” in the United States and elsewhere (see also McChesney 1999).

The Billionaires for Bush are creative political agents in this constricted discursive environment. Their protest style is emblematic of the restricted space for political dissent in post-9/11 America and the rising popularity of ironic genres of political critique such as Jon Stewart’s *Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* on the Comedy Central cable television channel and *The Onion*, an online satirical news journal.

To counter official discourse implying that good citizens are not protesters, the Billionaires for Bush bend the protest genre and draw sympathetic attention to a critique of dramatic economic inequality in the United States. The Billionaires deliberately avoid stereotypical markers of the “bad” protester category, reverse semiotic conventions, and craft an identity as “model” protesters. They lightheartedly evoke rhetorical and stylistic contrasts between their group and contemporary “angry liberals” and “hippies,” even as they themselves champion liberal and progressive political agendas. They charm the media as well as the police; and if they are ejected from a political event, they are politely escorted out rather than arrested.

Some might wonder if their parody of the ultrarich risks being safely absorbed into a larger society of spectacle rather than challenging those in power. But their aim, like other culture jammers,¹⁴ is to destabilize dominant corporate and editorial frames, and not necessarily to put forward a particular set of demands or policy program or to practice conventional community canvassing (though many satirical Billionaire participants do just that through their work with other organizations). Instead they are fundamentally “a mass, participatory media stunt” to convey a powerful idea—that “Big Money owns” candidates of both major political parties, as Boyd (2002b: 160) puts it, and that the big-money, corporate takeover of electoral politics has corrupted the democratic process, increased economic inequality, and harmed the poor and middle class. They oppose privatization of Social Security and media deregulation, and they support the tax on inherited wealth, or estate tax—which they label the “dynasty tax.” If the effects of their satire are ephemeral or difficult to trace, that does not preclude profundity or impact. Indeed in this context questions about conventional measures of political efficacy are sometimes beside the point. In 2004, the political field itself had become so fixed around President Bush that the Billionaires’ satire itself was inherently destabilizing. As an observer of the New York Billionaires’ 2004 tax day event commented, “I think it gets people to turn their head and question reality, which is great, you know.” The Billionaires’ sharply ironic humor can engage the otherwise apathetic, boost the morale of activists and dissenters, and shape political opinion. Irony, James Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber (2001: 1–2) remark, is a “valuable resource for inciting the moral and political imagination against whatever is given, assumed, or imposed.” The Billionaires’ stagecraft thus

warrants a place in the repertoires of modern protest. They illustrate innovative forms of political agency and promising domains of ethnographic inquiry into the contemporary politics of neoliberalism.

Meet the Billionaires

Members of Billionaires for Bush dress in tuxedos, top hats, evening gowns, and tiaras as they spotlight how President Bush's tax cuts and other policies have favored large corporations or the very wealthy at the expense of everyday Americans.¹⁵ Champagne glasses, cigarette holders, and huge cigars—as well as bright banners and placards—are their props. Members adopt satirical names such as Phil T. Rich, Iona Bigga Yacht, Lucinda Regulations, Noah Countability, Owen Dwight Howse, and Alan Greenspend. Their placards declare “Leave No Billionaire Behind,” “Corporations Are People Too,” “Widen the Income Gap,” and “Taxes Are Not for Everyone.” As a counterpoint to the quadrennial slogan “Four More Years,” the Billionaires for Bush shout “Four More Wars”—thereby deliberately creating confusion when they infiltrate Republican political events.

In everyday life, these Billionaires are artists, actors, writers, corporate professionals, academics, unemployed recent college graduates, and seasoned as well as novice activists. They have ties to a variety of other activist organizations and networks ranging from liberal NGOs to more culturally and politically radical direct action groups. Some have known one another for years through political and subcultural networks (e.g., Lower East Side environmental and economic justice activists, theater and art worlds, or previous electoral campaigns). Billionaires for Bush members tend to be white, well educated, and middle class or upper middle class—yet committed to the challenges of building cross-class and cross-race coalitions. For example, the New York chapter has participated in street demonstrations by Starbucks and Verizon employees struggling to unionize and improve working conditions. Billionaires are cybernetworked activists who recruit and mobilize members via the Internet, and they rely as well on crucial forms of social connectivity (meetings, social events, street actions). Such political networks, as Francesca Polletta and Edwin Amenta (2001: 306) note, provide “not only information but sympathy, trust, and emotional identification.”

Examples of their street actions include the Million Billionaire March during Republican and Democratic National Conventions, a ballroom-dancing flash mob¹⁶ in New York's Grand Central Station, thanking people outside post offices as they mail their tax returns on April 15, or auctioning off Social Security on President Bush's inauguration day. Calling out “Reappoint Bush!” and “Four More Wars!” the Billionaires joined the 500,000 anti-Bush protesters from countless activist groups who marched through the streets of New York in August 2004 to call attention to issues ranging from environ-

mental politics to human rights, war in Iraq, corporate power, sweatshops, health care, tax policies, the World Trade Organization, and news media that fail to serve the public interest. The Billionaires dubbed the U.S. Labor Day holiday “Cheap Labor Day” and displayed banners proclaiming “No Minimum Wage! No Minimum Age!” and “Subcontinents do it cheaper!” Thus their activist networks, satirical style, and critical agenda intersect with anti-corporate globalization activism (cf. Graeber 2001; N. Klein 2002).

Decoding the Message

When they are in character, the Billionaires always say the opposite of what they mean (as illustrated by the slogans mentioned above), and that can be confusing to spectators—at least at first. Some observers delight in catching on to the ruse, while others never fathom it. Billionaire street performances play on uncertainties and unsettle ideas about political categories. Thus a passerby at the Billionaires’ street event outside New York’s main post office on George Bush’s birthday may at first think the giant birthday card for the president is a kind gesture; then consider the context (final months of a presidential election campaign); look more closely at the staging, the slogans, and over-the-top impersonations of the ultrarich; and finally rethink the intentions behind the birthday display.¹⁷ Billionaire street performances are usually a mix of scripted, semiscripted, and improvised components. Audience members are active coproducers as well as consumers of meanings in Billionaire performances, which sometimes include lively interchanges with spectators. In such street theater, performers try to sustain spectators’ psychological collaboration throughout the performance, a process that includes, as William Beeman (1993: 386) observes in a different context, a crucial but fragile and constantly shifting phatic connection that “keeps all parties engaged with each other.”

A woman encountering the Billionaires for the first time at their April 15, 2004, tax-day street action outside New York City’s central post office asked me: “Is it a joke? I can’t figure out if it’s a joke.” A male passerby at the same event wondered: “But are they for or against Bush?” As passersby linger and watch, they usually realize that the “campy, spoofy” (as one observer put it) Billionaire impersonations are meant to be ironic. If a Bush supporter shouts something positive about the president, the Billionaires cheerily shout “Huzzah!”—after which a heckler is likely to walk away quickly. When a hostile passerby in Seattle shouted “So you blame Bush for everything?” the Billionaires stayed in character and replied “No, we think he’s the best president money can buy!” Sometimes Bush opponents who miss the irony of the Billionaires’ messages become furious and shout comments such as “that’s disgusting!” And Bush supporters who mistake the Billionaires for Republicans and take their slogans literally may either react with embarrassment (“We appreciate your support but can you tone it down?”) or become angry

and say the Billionaires are hurting the Republicans' image when they call out "Leave No Corporation Behind!" or "Four More Wars!" Thus an irate Republican letter writer to a New York radio station that had broadcast a Billionaire segment mistook irony for complicity and wrote, "You are making the Republican Party look like a bunch of out of touch elites!"

The Billionaires' success in depicting contemporary economic realities as playful or absurd depends on embedding their irony in carefully crafted affective and stylistic cues. These cues sometimes misfire, perhaps especially when the Billionaires attempt to cross class and race categories.

Rare critical observations came, for example, from an African American woman who worked for Verizon and an African American man, both bystanders at a union rally during their lunch break on a cool day in December 2004, a few blocks from Times Square. Neither of them had heard of the Billionaires. The woman (who later told me she was not a Bush supporter) commented that she had to work for a living whereas the Billionaires obviously could take time off during the middle of the day to dress up and perform at such an event. The man said, "They are people who have nothing better to do with their lives and don't actually work . . . the millionaire and his wife . . . I'm working and they have time to get into costumes and do this kinda stuff on a work day." While many Billionaire members do struggle to make ends meet, these observers on the street respond as much to the Billionaires' performance of conspicuous leisure as to the content of their play.

Given the well-known capacity of irony "to create or strengthen an ingroup of those in the know" (Fernandez and Huber 2001: 18), a possible limitation of the Billionaires' form of ironic humor is that its primary effect might be to energize or cheer up the Billionaires' own political base—that is, to help build solidarity among a liberal-left political elite who regularly consume media such as the *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, National Public Radio, Air America, and Pacifica Radio. Of course such solidarity itself can be a step toward broader political networks, strategies, and consequences. But, as Naomi Klein (2002 83) observes, "That art of being in-between, of being ironic, or camp . . . is based on an essential cliquiness, a club of people who get the aesthetic puns." Devising their ironic wordplay is the Billionaires' core intellectual enterprise. Crafting clever slogans and chants (backed up by careful economic policy research and production of talking points and messaging documents) is the focus of brainstorming sessions in their planning meetings, discussion and debate via e-mail, and informal discussion in other contexts. What is the rationale behind the design of the Billionaire brand?

Billionaire Charm Versus Liberal Anger

Delivering their message with humor and charm, elegantly dressed Billionaires for Bush perform in stylized opposition to popular cultural stereotypes

of scruffy “angry liberal” protesters or 1960s holdovers. (At the same time, they view themselves as morale boosters and media magnets for traditional protesters.) Manhattan Billionaire leaders in 2004 encouraged all their national chapters to avoid handmade signs and to use the professional and standardized visuals that can be downloaded from their Web site. Internet postings of Billionaire fashion tips, purchasable accessories (jewelry, dollar-print ties, tiaras), political message content (with policy background), and photos of Billionaire street actions circulate images of ideal Billionaire appearance and practices. Such normative signals conveyed electronically are reinforced and mediated through personal contacts between New York chapter leaders and chapter heads and members in other parts of the country. The organization’s New York leaders sometimes exercise a disciplining function, usually with a light touch, as they monitor chapter activities. But after the 2004 election, the Anchorage, Alaska, chapter of Billionaires for Bush was expelled from the organization because its leader wanted to spoof religion and cultural issues. It is Billionaire policy (as stated by Manhattan chapter leaders) not to take positions on “guns, gays, and abortion” and to redirect attention instead to economic issues. Because he did not wish to follow that policy, the Anchorage chapter head was told by the New York national field coordinator (by e-mail) that the organization appreciated his “passion and conviction,” but that “We’ll no longer consider ourselves to have an official Anchorage chapter and you’ll be unsubscribed from the B4B chapter leader discussion list as well.”

Through their dress and style the Billionaires for Bush play on capitalist desire by appropriating stereotypical symbols of corporate America and the contemporary Right (projecting images of wealth, clean-cut respectability, and professionalism) in order to advance an agenda now associated with the Left (reducing the disproportionate political influence of the ultrarich and large corporations). When the Billionaires and more traditional protesters share a public space, they sometimes engage in mock heckling of one another; “angry liberal” protesters bearing handmade signs and clad in casual clothes become “straight men” in glitzy Billionaire street theater. Emma Chastain (2004), writing about the Billionaires for Bush in the *New Republic Online*, lightheartedly counterposes the Billionaires’ effervescence, bonhomie, and “sunny good humor” on the one hand, and the “unseemly anger and earnestness of left-wing protesters,” “liberal fury rut,” “bitterness,” “scruffy lefty protesters” and a political “Left [that] takes itself too seriously” on the other.

Spectators’ remarks capture these semiotic oppositions. The Billionaires’ flashy visuals (tuxedos, evening gowns, professional banners and placards) and lighthearted, satirical style attract attention from passersby who say they might ignore more “traditional” protesters or would resent loud, angry

speech. Thus a man remarked as he watched the July 2004 Billionaire street action in New York to “celebrate” George Bush’s birthday: “It could be just another table with a bunch of hippies at it, and you’d just walk by and say, ‘yeah whatever—hippies.’ . . . But this is totally entertaining.” A well-dressed Republican couple, a man and woman in their early forties who planned to vote against Bush, observed the Billionaires for Bush at their July 2004 New York street action celebrating George Bush’s birthday and commented: “I think the key to protest now is not to alienate people, because you scare the cross-overs like we are, we’re Republican, lifelong Republicans, but we’re voting for Kerry. But we don’t want to go back to the sixties, where they’re so radical and they’re so obnoxious, if you will, that you scare away the cross-over people. . . . You know I think this type of thing is good because it appeals to people like us. . . . And the more protesters are like the rest of us the more influence you’ll have.”¹⁸

In short, spectators’ comments suggest that in early twenty-first-century America, when the category “protester” sheds its angry liberal and 1960s associations, its popular appeal expands—especially if protesters project images of celebrity, glamour, and wealth. By bending the protest genre in that way, the Billionaires for Bush both strategically adapt to and reflect the historical and discursive moment. On the one hand, Billionaires for Bush, when not in public performance mode, *are* angry liberals and, as a male Billionaire remarked, film depictions of the 1960s as a “magical fun time” actually attract many young people to activism. On the other hand, this same member noted, “We don’t look antiestablishment; we’re speaking truth to power but in a more palatable way than angry actors shaking a fist in the street.” Indeed the group’s establishment image itself draws some individuals to join; a white female Billionaire in her twenties says, “Part of what attracted me to the group is that you do get frustrated with standard fare protesters, you know the stereotypical way they look . . . traditional left-wing protest thing . . . it’s important in a place where billions and billions are spent every year advertising, making sure that you’re on the cutting edge of the image you want your message to get across.” Her comment again illustrates the group’s adaptation to neoliberal political spaces and market branding imperatives.

Does such protest become just another postmodern image produced for a culture of consumerism and designed for mass media circulation? Naomi Klein (2002: 309) argues that culture jamming is not just “harmless satire.” Even if some culture jammers exaggerate the power of parody as an end in itself, she suggests, many more see it simply as a new and more effective tool, one among many “in a much broader political movement against the branded life” of corporate logos (N. Klein 2002: 309). Indeed many Billionaire members do treat their form of parody as just one political tool among many. Thus they are active in other forms of organizing and politics—formal institutions

as well as informal networks, community organizing or traditional canvassing as well as performance parody.

Billionaires and the News Media

The impact of Billionaires for Bush depends not only on embodied performance but especially on news media coverage that extends their populist message beyond individuals who encounter the group directly. They have a savvy public relations team that issues press releases announcing their events in advance, as well as talented interviewees who are well informed about politics and policy. In their earlier (2000) incarnation as Billionaires for Bush (or Gore), they learned that the mainstream media “could be seduced to ‘play along’ with the literal, tongue-in-cheek meaning, letting the public decode the implied and subversive meanings for themselves” (Boyd 2002b: 372). Indeed journalists find the group to be unusually charming protesters. *Washington Post* associate editor Robert Kaiser, for example, wrote in 2004 that “Billionaires for Bush, no matter what your politics, must be one of the most likable protest groups ever formed” (Kaiser 2004).

Media coverage of the Billionaires spiked after a spectacular February 2004 street action in Manhattan, where about one hundred protesters from various groups had gathered outside a Republican fund-raising reception at a nightclub where Karl Rove was the guest speaker. At first security agents and other protesters were confused by the Billionaires, who marched over to join Republican supporters on the street. A few minutes later, as reported in a witty *New York Times* article, “A black town car pulled up and out stepped a man whom the crowd assumed to be Mr. Rove. ‘There is Karl Rove,’ people shouted. Reporters, photographers and television cameramen swarmed the man, but the police pushed them back. Another man lifted the velvet rope to let him enter. But the would-be Mr. Rove walked over to the crowd of protesters and began shaking hands, when finally, again, this was seen to be a joke. It was not Mr. Rove, but an actor playing the part” (Slackman and Moynihan 2004). Members of the Billionaires delight in showing the video and telling the story of the “Karl Rove action,” where, as one member remarked, they “scrambled reality for a brief shining moment.” He notes that the police were confused, and other protesters and even other Billionaires were fooled and started yelling at the Karl Rove impersonator thinking he actually was Karl Rove. (To safeguard the secret, only a handful of members were in on the planning of the joke ahead of time.) A few months after the Rove event, a *New York Times* article about novel protest tactics referred to the Billionaires for Bush as “one of the better known of the theatrical protest groups” (Archibold 2004). Such external representations of the group are quickly absorbed into their self-representations and self-images. For the Billionaires, the “Rove action” was a success that helped to establish or fix their public identity (at least

among readers of the *New York Times*) during the 2004 campaign season as clever, lighthearted protesters.

By September 2004, the Billionaires' public relations team had tracked some 225 major print and broadcast media mentions (a number that continued to grow significantly as the election approached).¹⁹ These ranged from the *New York Times* (multiple mentions) to the *International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, numerous other daily newspapers, newsmagazines, and major television networks such as CBS, ABC, Fox News, and CNN. News stories about the Billionaires for Bush are often tongue-in-cheek, entertaining accounts, with headlines such as "Tuxedos, Pearls, and Satire Fill the Streets," "Billionaires Take the Time to Thank 'The Little People,'" "The Birth of the Meta-Protest Rally?" "Billionaires for Bush? Well, Yes and No."

As these headlines suggest, the Billionaires fit a media niche focused on protest style—contrasting the humorous and ostensibly new with the serious and traditional (notwithstanding the long history of irony and humor as techniques of resistance). In such news articles, the Billionaires' policy issues (taxation, media monopolies, corporate accountability, education, health care, campaign finance, growing economic inequality) are often mentioned in passing rather than analyzed in depth. Yet even when national broadcast and print media coverage emphasized protest style over substance, the Billionaires' populist message still could be conveyed—sometimes fleetingly—through the group's name, members' names, and slogans displayed on their banner and placards. The premise of the Billionaire approach is to "embed a threatening idea inside a nonthreatening form," as their cofounder Boyd (2002b: 372) puts it, and to allow the concision of the Billionaires for Bush name to "inoculate" it against distortion and permit their subversive message to penetrate corporate news filters intact.²⁰

During the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign, critical or populist messages carried new force as they entered a public arena enlivened by the launch of the liberal Air America radio (featuring Al Franken), Jon Stewart's televised *Daily Show*, Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, advocacy groups such as MoveOn.org and America Coming Together, the documentary *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism*, and critical best-selling books by former Bush administration insiders such as former treasury secretary Paul O'Neill (Suskind 2004) and counterterrorism adviser Richard Clarke (2004). In the chilly climate for dissent in post-9/11 America, the electoral politics of 2004 created a political space for criticism that had been "staved off," as cartoonist Art Spiegelman (2004) put it, "until it could be contained as part of our business as usual."

The Billionaires for Bush are symptomatic of both the possibilities and the limitations of that discursive moment. While their playful, ironic approach was remarkably suited to the time, the Billionaires' irony might have attracted less media coverage and held less popular appeal had it *not* been conveyed

by elegantly dressed activists. In costume, the Billionaires project a glamour that appears to signal complicity with—and indeed derives legitimacy from—the very culture of celebrity and wealth they critique. Thus they model self-criticism for the elites they pretend to be, even as they signal the improbability of such elite self-critique.²¹

Likability can be a mixed blessing for protesters, and a Billionaire member suggested that the Yippies of the 1960s would be horrified by the kind of media plaudits enjoyed by the Billionaires. So too might other contemporary protest groups. Yet all depend on media attention in order to circulate their messages. Media complicity with (often hostile or trivializing) official representations of protest (McLeod and Hertog 1999; Gitlin 2003; Goodwin and Jasper 2003: 257–60), as well as increasing state repression and surveillance of activists, help to redefine the range of protest styles considered “safe” or likely to win sympathetic media coverage and public attention. McLeod and Hertog’s (1999) study of U.S. media coverage of anarchist protest found that mainstream coverage “emphasizes the actions rather than the issues of a protest in a way that protects the illusion of objectivity” (314), tends to rely on official sources and official definitions, and often depicts protesters as violating norms of dress and behavior, whereas the alternative press focuses on social norms violated by the institutions or agencies that are the targets of the protesters. The Billionaires’ strategy is to adapt to a corporate media environment they cannot change, in the hope that their style, charm, and entertainment value do not overshadow their message about economic justice.

Today’s media environment encourages protest that charms onlookers and offers attractive and professional visuals (colorful signs, banners, and costumes). As a media favorite and cultural touchstone in niche coverage of protest “style,” the Billionaires in 2004 were particularly polished protesters who drew energy from their favorable media coverage²² and from a cultural receptivity to political satire.

In short, the Billionaires are masterful at staging protest as a playful, appealingly glamorous spectacle, a fresh act. As they spoof the ultrarich with culturally resonant symbols, they obey the law, charm the public, and disable negative media and official stereotypes of protesters. The Billionaires brilliantly suit a discursive environment in which, as a member put it, “these days, if you’re going to ‘speak truth to power,’ you’d better make sure that ‘truth’ is infotainment.” The political effects and limitations of this mode of speaking truth to power have only begun to be understood.

Billionaire Accomplishments, Limitations, Possibilities

By November 2004, the Billionaires for Bush had attracted many individuals to political activism for the first time; built a national organization of one hundred chapters in several dozen states; persuaded some voters to oppose

Bush; energized their political base; created crucial forms of social connectivity (through meetings, social events, street actions) that complemented their cybernetworking; and established linkages to other political groups, unions, and other organizations. These attainments constitute resources for future political action. The effects of such mobilizations can be quite subtle and are notoriously difficult to assess (see Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1999; Tarrow 1998). Yet the Billionaires, like other grassroots advocacy networks, might be credited with helping to reframe debates, introduce new ideas and norms, inform voters (or at least prompt voters to question prior assumptions), expand political participation, and mobilize social networks in ways that can shape later political movements, policies, and institutions.

The impact of any single organizing effort of course is limited; effective challenges to the status quo require multiple mobilizations. And as Sidney Tarrow (1998: 23–24) notes, if collective action succeeds, the political openings that shaped the constituent movements (which may be “complementary, competing or hostile”) in turn “produce broader cycles of contention that spread from movement activists to those they oppose, to ordinary interest groups and political parties, and inevitably, to the state.” In the aftermath of the 2004 U.S. presidential election, these wider social and political fields were in flux as activist groups and coalitions were partitioning, re-sorting, and reassembling. Like other progressives who were deeply saddened by the election outcome, the Billionaires for Bush in late 2004 began to reassess the political environment, restructure their own organization, and explore new alliances and opportunities in both formal and informal political arenas (see Haugerud, n.d.).

They face an American public culture that celebrates wealth during a period that has witnessed what Thomas Frank (1997: 257) terms “the most vicious attack on the public well-being by private wealth in decades.” Wealth inequality in the United States today exceeds that of most industrialized nations (Keister and Moller 2000: 63–64), and income inequality rivals that of the *Great Gatsby* era (Krugman 2002). In the interval between past and present Gilded Ages, Paul Krugman remarks, the concentration of income at the top fell sharply and middle-class society flourished, but that phase from the New Deal through the first two postwar decades simply constitutes an interregnum between Gilded Ages.

In 2004 nearly half of the world’s 587 billionaires were U.S. citizens, according to the business journal *Forbes*.²³ Although many Americans have a strong faith in the Horatio Alger myth of upward economic mobility (see also Marla Frederick’s chapter in this volume), such mobility has declined in recent decades.²⁴ Despite sharply rising economic inequality, class in the United States “is often held to have no meaning at all,” Harvey (2005: 31) notes. He suggests that “it is one of the primary fictions of neoliberalism that class is a fictional category . . . [and] the phrase ‘class warfare’ is now confined to the

right-wing media . . . to denigrate all forms of criticism that threaten to undermine a supposedly unified and coherent national purpose” (Harvey 2005: 202). As inequality rose sharply, Frank (2004: 5–6) argues, the last three decades of the twentieth century saw Republican politicians displace economic populism by systematically “downplay[ing] the politics of economics,” staging battles over cultural “values” instead, and marshaling “cultural anger to achieve economic ends” such as deregulation, privatization, “free” trade, deunionization, and large tax reductions for corporations and the wealthy (see also Lakoff 2004).²⁵ In denouncing those policies, the *Billionaires for Bush* in 2004 aimed to help return public attention to vital economic issues. There are no U.S. institutions and no substantial political force, Frank writes, to “counterbalance, challenge, or even question . . . the choices” of the nation’s holders of private wealth (1997: 259). That glaring absence motivates grassroots political movements such as the satirical *Billionaires* to challenge the neoliberal state on populist economic issues that are inadequately addressed through conventional politics.²⁶ The 2008 financial crisis reinjected the *Billionaires’* core issues into the public sphere as the meltdown exposed what many saw as stark failings of economic neoliberalism.

The *Billionaires’* economic agenda is conveyed through “cultural” resistance—playful subversions of popular images, symbols, and assumptions. Some theorists, as Stephen Duncombe (2002: 6) notes, view cultural resistance as “an escape from politics and a way to release discontent that might otherwise be expressed through political activity,” and others go even further by arguing that cultural resistance “cannot exist,” that it is fully “incorporated into a society of spectacle,” and that even apparently rebellious cultural expressions “will soon be repackaged and transformed into, a component of the status quo.”²⁷ The significance and effects of creative activists such as the *Billionaires*—including how members themselves assess their organization’s success—are issues I explore more fully elsewhere (Haugerud, n.d.). Here I would emphasize that cultural resistance can be a vital step in helping to destabilize political categories, reframe debates, introduce new ideas and norms, rewrite discourse, and build new political communities.

At a time when the host of an award-winning satirical news program (Jon Stewart) has become one of America’s most trusted sources of information (Kakutani 2008)—admired for holding the powerful accountable—the political potency of humor cannot be discounted. Indeed, humor—whose source Mark Twain locates in pain not joy—reflects a profound human quest to make sense of the world, to create meaning. We must also ask how political meaning is expressed through policies and material results—without forgetting, as Rebecca Solnit (2006: 123) puts it, that “the most foundational change of all, the one from which all else issues, is hardest to track . . . politics arises out of culture, out of the spread of ideas and the shaping of imaginations . . . symbolic and cultural acts have real political power. . . . belief can be more effective

than violence.” Analysis of this terrain is well suited to ethnography—a discipline attuned to blurred boundaries between informal and formal political domains and to multiple registers of political practice.

Conclusion

During the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign the Billionaires for Bush deployed parody to navigate past the sensitivities of class and to bring skyrocketing economic inequality into full political view. Their popular appeal rested on skillful deployment of semiotic contrasts reproduced in the media (and in official discourses and practices) and reiterated through performance: Billionaire charm versus liberal anger—or protesters who were elegant rather than scruffy, hip rather than traditional, polite rather than offensive, and harmless rather than dangerous. As they cultivated an ostensibly new role of good protester and challenged older stereotypes, they were confined by the logic of the semiotic binaries, but stretched those binaries in ways intended to change political perceptions or consciousness.

A fundamental question implied by such countermovements to neoliberalism, Gledhill (2004: 347) observes, is “what is the economy ultimately *for*, and can we not have a choice about the kind of *life* that we want in a world as rich as this one in which so many remain poor?” Neoliberalism, in contrast, assumes that a “market-based popular culture of differentiated consumerism and individual libertarianism” (Harvey 2005: 42) eventually yields the best outcome for all. Embodying the notion that “the (post)modern person is a subject made with objects” (as Jean and John Comaroff put it in a different context [2005: 178]), the Billionaires stand out visually amid crowds of protesters by deploying glittering consumption symbols to attract corporate media coverage. They project a neoliberal metric of social worth—namely consumption style as marker of wealth and status²⁸—and in one sense become part of the object they critique, even as they also call attention to what democracy loses as economic inequality and corporate power expand. Yet their thrift-store gowns and tuxedos and their ironic messaging subvert conventional meanings attached to commodities such as a tiara, white gloves, silk dress, or top hat. As they simultaneously mimic and mock consumption-based values, they project enough elegance and charm to stand apart from stereotypes of scruffy protesters—and therefore to win the sympathetic attention of mainstream media and of bystanders like the well-dressed, lifelong Republican cross-over voter at a Billionaire street action who said “the more protesters are like the rest of us the more influence you’ll have.” Thus on the one hand the Billionaires reproduce what Gledhill (2004: 339) terms the “neoliberalization of everyday life” that is fostered by a culture of consumerism. On the other hand, they challenge that framework as they manipulate status symbols through parodies that are both strategically complicit and subversive.

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Part III

Markets for Cultural Diversity

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Chapter 8

The Question of Freedom

Post-Emancipation South Africa in a Neoliberal Age

ANNE-MARIA MAKHULU

Exploring that terrain requires recognizing that ultimately and philosophically freedom is a problem of social relations, at its core a problem of how human beings sustain and reproduce themselves. Clearly, this means that it is susceptible to determination by material forces and must be understood in its material context. . . . As in 1838, what was envisioned was a “freedom” drained of the power of genuine self-determination: materially, a freedom stripped of control over basic material resources; ideologically, a freedom that internalized its own antithesis.

—Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*

The early 1990s saw one chapter in world history coming to a close and another just as surely beginning. After the fall of the Wall, the collapse of communism, and European unification, changes on a planetary scale, the new era promised both uncertainty and possibility. Yet while it may have appeared that such a revolution in politics and economy was limited to the North, other such changes were unfolding to the South. In South Africa, the end of apartheid and the collapse of minority rule raised questions about that postcolony's place in the new geopolitical configuration and the vulnerability of its markets no less than its political ideals. Because South Africa's liberation struggle had concluded *after* “actually existing socialism,” there was a sense in which the old Marxist-Leninist¹ and Pan-Africanist principles, so instrumental to the struggle, were no longer salient. Bearing little relevance for a new era, they quickly eroded with the introduction of a different kind of revolution—a revolution of the market.

In South Africa as elsewhere as state control over the national economy ceded ground under deregulatory policies, what had stood for politics in the past seemed to recede too, almost as if the political were giving way to

a *post*-political age. Gone were the pretensions to class solidarities and political organizing centered on the struggle to end colonialism, racism, and class rule. And this fact seemed to change the very language used to describe the transition as public discourse shifted from a focus on the past—on problems of reparation for historic wrongs and on the promise of redistribution of resources—to a focus on a present that seemed oddly unconscious of recent history.² Everywhere *democracy* was fast becoming the catchphrase of the late twentieth century in part perhaps because it disguised a very particular mystification: the conflation of freedom and free markets. These new values left little room for discussion of substantive citizenship and socioeconomic rights, matters more directly connected to a sense of historical entitlement that decolonization rather than democratization might have encompassed. In short, even the semantics of emancipation had been transformed. Two ghosts, two specters perhaps, haunted this conversation: on the one hand, John Maynard Keynes—once synonymous with postwar reconstruction and state planning in Europe—and on the other, Friedrich A. von Hayek—that long-suffering visionary who saw markets as mechanisms of social coordination (Hayek 1994). In South Africa as elsewhere, as Keynes' fortunes waned, Hayek's waxed as he became, at least in some figurative sense, the key author of the neoliberal reform movement. And South Africans (some, that is), whether willingly or unwillingly, seemed to be embracing a new vision of history, or more accurately, a vision of the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992).

Post-apartheid values of freedom and non-racialism, while given symbolic weight, in practice reaffirmed the complicity of race and class in undermining claims to democratic citizenship and the myth of equal access to resources, rights, and benefits regardless of complexion. To quote Holt, "something was amiss in the very project of emancipation, in the very premises on which it was founded" (1992: xix). Emancipation had been emptied of content, and without control over basic material resources ordinary citizens, recently enfranchised, could only imagine the full scope of freedom's possibilities. Further, new forms of heteronomy (limits on self-determination) seemed to emerge as a *consequence* of the struggle for liberation or, at the very least, coterminous with it, constraining the scope of politics and democracy in its broadest sense; constraining too effective responses to growing demands for housing, schooling, universal health care, and a "better life for all."³ Yet this postcolony in the South differed little from so many other places in the world, where the formula of freedom and free markets seemed to introduce as much a sense of despair as triumphalism; of having to look in on a world of prosperity from its "immiserated exteriors" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 315).

Disappointment came relatively slowly, reflecting a paradox on which "short term stability has depended"—namely on "the illusion among whites that nothing has really changed and among blacks that everything has changed" (Marks 1998: 17). But as ambitious promises of housing delivery, job creation,

and social benefits translated into less than impressive outcomes, hope inevitably turned to disillusionment. Without a doubt, the pendulum was swinging violently in this post-transition society. And while South Africans may have imagined their many problems ranging from soaring levels of violent crime (cf. Steinberg 2001), to unemployment, flourishing markets in illegal goods, and a general sense of insecurity to be a peculiarly South African problem, much the same could be said of countries stretching from post-socialist Eastern Europe to Latin America. Moreover, while promising measurable improvement the very policies that guaranteed social transformation were being systematically undercut by the adoption of neoliberal reforms. Perhaps the starkest example comes from the housing sector where approximately three million South African households required formal housing in the mid-1990s. Yet attempts to stem the tide of homelessness through the introduction of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)—a state-driven housing initiative—coincided with the state's implementation of a new policy of privatization, trade liberalization, and downsizing (the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme, or GEAR). The RDP soon became a welfare initiative executed by private stakeholders with little interest beyond profitability. By 1999, when the RDP was quietly dissolved by the National Assembly, it was still one of the only significant state initiatives focused on poverty eradication.

The problems of South Africa's less than seamless transition to democracy and those reforms that were swiftly introduced almost coterminously are problems on a very large scale and perhaps only grasped in the abstract. In the following section of this chapter I hope to offer at least a small glimpse of some of the ways in which everyday life on the margins of Cape Town articulates both a set of possibilities—an urban politics, if one will—and at the same time refracts the larger structural contradictions of contemporary South Africa in the grip of neoliberalization.

The Archaeology of the Post-Apartheid City

I began fieldwork in 1998 in a series of informal settlements located on the outskirts of Cape Town, the so-called “Mother City.” These were areas that grew out of a twofold prohibition on permanent residence: (1) a series of government-initiated housing construction freezes in African townships, dating back to the early 1970s,⁴ and (2) the far-reaching and longstanding Coloured Labour Preference Policy (first implemented in 1955), which prioritized the hiring of Coloured⁵ over African labor in the Cape Peninsula. While these and other policies (the Group Areas and Urban Areas Acts among them) could never entirely stem the flow of people arriving from the countryside, together they effectively drove African migrants into “illegal” settlements. Notably, while the Peninsula could never claim the largest migrant population

or the most extensive “squatter problem,” Cape Town was home to the single largest African population nationwide targeted for removal by the 1980s (Surplus People Project 1984). So at least in relative terms the migrant labor system and a confluence of other forces made the region strategically critical to the evolution of highly repressive policies of urban management and consolidation. African women, much like male migrants, were subject to related but distinct prohibitions on movement—through the so-called “breadwinner’s clause”—which further constrained their search for employment and dictated that those women traveling to the Peninsula did so only on condition they left their families behind in the countryside. Under the clause, women were entitled to seek employment in the city, but were limited to six-month contracts. In many cases, squatter areas grew out of this double bind, that is, the restrictions on both men and women, but more specifically the demands that such restrictions placed on family life. It needs to be clearly stated that despite the degree of repression, the settlements were not solely places of last resort. And that in serving as stepping stones on the path to urban employment they came to be experienced as places of opportunity and hence as “spaces of hope” (Harvey 2000).

Nevertheless, urban Africans were *de facto* criminalized as a consequence of the breadwinner’s clause and other general proscriptions on freedom of movement. Such disciplinary techniques made it incredibly difficult for African people to settle permanently in the city and profoundly affected those spaces of intimacy and the processes of social reproduction at the disposal of the family (cf. Foucault 1991). Indeed, men with passbooks, while permitted to live and work in urban areas, did so for the most part only on condition that they came without their wives and partners and resided in what were referred to at the time as “single-sex hostels”—a virtual army barracks arrangement provided by local municipalities and in some cases by industry. Hence many women found themselves living illegally with husbands and partners in the townships, placing them under constant threat of pass raids and deportation. Even so, once returned to the rural reserves, many made the journey back to the city in efforts to flee the increasing economic devastation of the countryside (J. Cole 1987), which was the consequence of labor migrancy as much as policies of land dispossession dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶

I chose to begin this section with a brief account of the historical circumstances in which squatter areas, now more commonly referred to as “informal settlements,” became a vital resource for migrants, in part as a way of distinguishing the apartheid and post-apartheid periods. At the same time, though, the apartheid regime and the new liberal constitutional democracy function under quite distinct political logics—the one being a system of minority rule, the other a system of majority rule. What is perhaps most striking is the perpetuation of certain features of the old way of life: the continual

movement of people between town and country, even since the dissolution of the apartheid migrant labor system, as much as the degree to which the new privatization regime has introduced other, not always entirely distinct, challenges to African domestic life in the city. Thus while the political freedoms of the new citizenship are undeniable, in truth, today, “South Africans are worse off than they were before the end of apartheid, at least as measured by real income.” Indeed “average incomes of South African men and women fell by about 40 percent between 1995 and 2000” (Balls 2006). So for those who would argue on purely formalistic grounds that democracy brings undeniable benefits, the realities of living on the margins of South Africa’s major cities—in shantytowns and settlements that lack services, proper housing, and utilities—suggest that in fact neoliberal reforms and their modes of “adjustment” have created an enormous gulf between the formal and substantive benefits of national belonging on one hand and urban residence on the other.

What follows is one way “in” to the concrete experience of everyday life under diminished material conditions; of lives lived on the geographical margins of the city as much as its social and economic ones. And of what it means to engage nevertheless optimistically or at the very least pragmatically in the project of affective labor: of social reproduction and its attendant reciprocal and redistributive care.

Life in Lower Crossroads

Ayaka lived on Sikwenene Street, Lower Crossroads—an informal settlement, one in a series of adjoining settlements, called Philippi.⁷ Today, some among these approximate the status of formally planned townships. Ayaka’s shack was modest, even by local township standards—three rooms including a small kitchen, living room, and bedroom she shared with her daughter. The living room led off the kitchen and from its worn plush sofas, looking through the open doorway to the street, one could see the lifeworld of the location⁸ beyond. Children played with old tires, small stones, and other discarded items, their excited shrieks carried on the breeze. A local hunter might pass by of an afternoon, his pack of mangy hunting dogs following, all the while bells clanging from makeshift collars. On a nearby thoroughfare taxis jostled for advantage, some swerving dangerously to overtake the competition, their horns blasting as they screeched to a standstill in front of waiting passengers at curbside.

At least in June 1999—during a Cape midwinter with frozen late nights and early mornings, warming to a pleasant lunchtime heat, which quickly dissipated in late afternoon—Ayaka lived in this improvised home (like so many others on her street and adjoining streets) while recent innovations consisted of outdoor water taps and toilets on every plot, hook-up to the electrical grid, newly tarmacked roads, and the ultimate promise of formal homes to

come. These were the undeniable benefits of democracy, yet, at every turn these improvements might well be denied: utilities and services were fast being privatized; the delivery of homes was slowing; while the quality of what was delivered was declining (the effect of the turn to outsourcing).⁹ Against the backdrop of these larger processes, Ayaka's life ambitions turned around the raising of a young daughter against impossible odds, running a home on close to nothing, and holding onto a husband whose alcoholism drew on precious material and emotional resources.

Not for the first time, Ayaka and a group of nine other women had formed a *stokvel* (a savings scheme) in 1997. While most such associations offer members support in times of financial need—providing access to emergency funds or supporting new business ventures—using the association's funds for the purchase of durable goods was a little less common (Buijs 1998: 58). However, in Ayaka's group, members hoping to make large purchases could enlist the help of the other participants, and together members would discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of those items that a given member proposed to buy, moving to raise the necessary money once all agreed to support the venture. In other such schemes similar arrangements exist, particularly in relation to the raising of "grocery" and occasionally "meat" funds to enable households to sustain themselves in the most immediate ways.

At the time, Ayaka's husband, Zwayi, had been working on and off and continued to draw a regular, if relatively small, wage. Her membership eligibility had been in large part determined on the basis of her husband's work; in fact, most of the women could claim a steady source of income through husbands and other kin fortunate enough to have jobs. Before approaching the group, Ayaka had been to a series of furniture dealers in search of a wall unit generally available on hire purchase¹⁰ with a sizable down payment. These are often used to subdivide private and public space in small homes lacking interior partition walls. In large households where parents and children are often of necessity forced to sleep together in the same room, a wall unit or "room divider" offers some minimal privacy. Ayaka spoke to the women's group and after some discussion they had agreed to support her endeavor. The group proposed to enter into a first round of giving in one-hundred-Rand increments,¹¹ totaling one thousand Rand (R1,000); this included a one hundred Rand (R100) contribution from Ayaka to the general kitty.¹²

Having identified a suitable wall unit at Price and Pride (a furniture chain) and armed with contributions from the other nine women, Ayaka traveled into Wynberg (center of the furniture trade in Cape Town), where she then made a deposit of R360 on the purchase of the unit. Ayaka also purchased outright for R499 a secondhand kitchen cabinet, leaving approximately R140 for food shopping. A month later, the group reconvened, this time to contribute R100 each to a second member who hoped to redecorate her home with a number of basic furnishings. And so this process was repeated until each member of the

group had satisfied desires deriving in part from fantasies of suburban life—a staple of post-apartheid soap operas that depict a post-racial society in which Black and White live side by side in suburban subdivisions, work and socialize together, and in which Blacks are very often represented as affluent professionals. *Generations* and other such television dramas seem to equate heroism with entrepreneurship and the material benefits that accrue from high-profile and high-salaried positions in consulting, banking, and other corporate work. This vision of the possible stands quite apart from the obstacles to education and professionalization of Africans under apartheid, and yet in the very representation of the overcoming of recent history there is a keen recognition of both the travesties of the past and the ongoing challenges to Black success and upward mobility. In a sense, the post-apartheid moment has been thus far characterized by a continual renegotiation of possibility and powerlessness.

Once everyone had received R1,000, almost all the women owed significant amounts of money to shops and companies from whom they had purchased goods. Moreover, although Ayaka's total monthly household budget was only R800 or R900 she owed a staggering one quarter of that (R221) in monthly installments, this aside from her ongoing contributions to the stokvel. Inevitably, most such situations result in nonpayment and, in some rare cases, repossession.

Already heavily indebted, Ayaka's situation deteriorated with the loss of Zwayi's job; he had been working as a truck driver and by the end of 1997, as the company downsized, he was laid off. There was in all of this a sense of the inevitable, a process of "protracted failure" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004: 336), which seemed to strike one member of the stokvel after another, until it eventually disbanded. I should note that the late 1990s were a particularly critical phase in the institution of deregulatory policies and efforts to privatize the public sector, which came to be directly correlated with the steady attrition in employment. By the end of South Africa's first decade of freedom one million jobs had been lost in mining, manufacturing, and agriculture and unemployment was already at an all-time high of 38.6 percent by the end of 1998. No longer was labor alienated (freed) from the means of production, labor of this kind (redundant labor) no longer formed any part of the means of production whatsoever. It had been "freed" in the very worst sense.

Local households and their domestic balance sheets can be grasped in a variety of ways and certainly there is plenty of available statistical data in South Africa on microlending, household consumer patterns, and so on (see *Financial Diaries*, n.d.; also see Collins, Murdoch, Rutherford and Ruthven 2009). Nevertheless, the actual mechanics of earnings and expenditures in households with relatively limited means of generating income remains something of a black box. Arguably, this has to do in some measure with those forms of labor within households that facilitate the day-to-day survival of its members in ways more or less invisible to the standard calculus of income

flowing in and out of the domestic space. These invisible mechanisms include forms of immaterial or affective labor, as well as, specifically, redistributive labor, which some may argue is merely a subcategory of the larger category of reproductive work. For example, Ayaka's "brother," that is, her clansman with whom she shares a clan name and thus certain social obligations, spent considerable time at her home: Mbuyiselo ate at Ayaka's table, watched television, spent countless hours with Ayaka's husband Zwayi, and even used the phone, which was later disconnected owing to nonpayment. He did not, as one might logically expect, directly contribute any resources to the household. Instead Mbuyiselo's earnings, which derived at the time from a small research salary, were redirected back to his parents within an intergenerational circuit—moving from child to parent and then back from parent to child through the sharing of pension checks on one side and wage earnings on the other. Mbuyiselo was also making contributions to his parents' burial association: an institutional arrangement not altogether distinct from the *stokvel*, its major function being to ensure that the ritual of death is duly marked with solemn funeral festivities. Ayaka "benefited," if one may put it that way, from the solid counsel Mbuyiselo offered regarding her marriage, often reining in Zwayi's drinking when it risked spiraling out of control, and in his capacity as a local community activist and politician. This latter role afforded Ayaka and her family a fair degree of symbolic capital they could "spend" in other ways.

After completing that first round of buying, the women in Ayaka's group began a second round. This time contributions were reduced to R50 and members modified their consumer goals accordingly. For a second time, one woman received a lump sum from the group, totaling R500, and once again this included a contribution of R50, which she made on her own behalf. The group went through the same cycle of lending and borrowing, the same determinations of trust, and from these followed the acquisition of new goods and a further escalation in personal debt.

At least in this form, the *stokvel* built through a negative telos, inasmuch as its movement from inception to dissolution proceeded in a downward spiral, resolving in deepening obligations and the eventual collapse of the overall institutional structure of the scheme. Such arrangements, though easily distinguishable from the competitive forms of gifting generally associated with potlatch (cf. Bataille 1988) in which increasing expenditures or modes of consumption are at stake, equally rely on critical transfigurations of value. The mere fact of indebtedness is not in itself a rejection or denial of value therefore. And while the burning of sumptuary objects (in potlatch rituals) and debt creation are hardly comparable activities, each transcends so-called commonsense utility to reveal alternative logics at work in value's movement and transformation.

Stokvels and their peculiar teleologies bring social agency under conditions of extreme marginality into sharp focus. There is a practical "imagining [of]

what life ought to be like as [a] moral project" (Graeber 2001: 22), even if that project's conditions of emergence rely on variously awkward economic strategies that, on one hand, make visible the economic instabilities of the broader society and, on the other, offer concrete modes of overcoming and redirecting value in and through the family, if only temporarily. While all such schemes do not function in this way, the course or devolution of this specific scheme is important. Ayaka had previously belonged to a similar scheme in the 1980s when she resided in Old Crossroads—one of the first informal settlements in the area, dating back to the mid-1970s. That scheme had operated purely on the basis of savings and contributions that bore no relationship to indebtedness. Very plainly, the crisis of unemployment and the disarticulation of urban settlement from wage work had not then reached the crisis point it did in the late 1990s. And so there was a concrete, material basis to practices of lending and contribution.

In the shift from straightforward savings during the course of the 1980s to an elaborate debt structure held together through moral ties between women a decade later, the *stokvel*, as a locally situated institution, provides an optic through which the conditions of South African neoliberalism may be read. It is surely no coincidence that this shift from savings to debt should arise concomitantly with the structural transformation of the South African economy in the mid to late 1990s. Viewed this way, ethnography becomes not simply a mode of inquiry into the local, but rather a way of representing a larger structural process in the world through which local and global, North and South are co-implicated. I am not, however, suggesting that all practices of saving and borrowing have shifted entirely to a focus on debt and debt creation—there are far too many counterexamples to make such a proposition sustainable. Rather, in gauging the reciprocative and redistributive work of households on the Flats—on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town and historically a dumping ground for Blacks and Coloureds under apartheid—the labor that credit and debt does seems particularly significant to a world increasingly driven by credit, not only on the local level, but in boardrooms and on stock and mercantile exchanges everywhere (see *Economist* 2006).

Thus, while the locatedness of anthropological practice—its apparent concern with minutiae—might suggest a very limited capacity to address larger structural questions, those structural questions often become much more easily decipherable in the course of ethnographic engagement. *Stokvels* like the one in which Ayaka was a member in the late 1990s, at that precise moment when the full force of neoliberalism was to be felt in Asian markets, post-transition societies in the former Eastern Bloc, Central America, and southern Africa, appear to have mimicked the very tendencies of that moment in millennial capitalism. In their propensity to produce and grow debt, *stokvels* reflect on a small scale the widespread crisis of debt and debt "management" within both the so-called First and Third Worlds. To be sure, these are debt

crises of quite distinct nature and scale. In the United States and Europe, debt is constructed through credit relations with banks and third parties; for that matter, debt is securitized through its transfer to investors. In the southern countries the trope of indebtedness is mostly defined as a matter of what the underdeveloped world “owes” the First World. Naturally, these are structurally linked conditions whose appearance as ontologically distinct phenomena has to be carefully interrogated.

Modes of Production Thinking: The Basic Premise

Harold Wolpe, the well-known Marxist sociologist, in his 1972 essay “Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid,” proposed a reformulation of the “race-class” debate that had dogged the analysis of apartheid: what Wolpe saw as the “overwhelming importance accorded to race” in approaches that sought to define “the relationship between racially oriented action and ‘the economy’” (Wolpe 1972: 429). Frustrated with liberal, radical, and racist analyses that dwelt on the supposed opposition between race and class, Wolpe argued that it detracted in no way from “the conception of the State as an instrument of White domination, however, to insist that the South African state is also an instrument of class rule in a specific form of capitalist society” (429). More properly, the state could be understood as the means of reproduction of racist policies and ideologies, but these efforts were also, in fact, attempts at perpetuating the means of reproduction of a particular mode of production. Here, I take “reproduction” to have a double sense, particularly as this relates to the place of the African family as a site critical to social and biological reproduction, however attenuated by the constraints of apartheid biopolitics.

Like other theorists of colonial political economy, Wolpe was grappling with the ways in which South Africa’s industrialization depended on a space outside itself; that is a pre-capitalist economy. Echoing any number of theories of primitive or *previous* accumulation (A. Smith 1976; Luxemburg 2003), he argued that for a significant period, South Africa’s economy had been dual. “In South Africa, the development of capitalism has been bound up with, first, the deterioration of the productive capacity and then, with increasing rapidity, the destruction of the pre-capitalist societies. In the earlier period of capitalism (approximately 1870 to the 1930s), the rate of surplus value and hence the rate of capital accumulation depended above all upon the maintenance of the pre-capitalist relations of production in the Reserve economy which provided a portion of the means of reproduction of the migrant labour force” (Wolpe 1972: 432). More recently, Patrick Bond has observed that the Bantustan (homeland) system, which inscribed the logic of unremunerated female labor in the country and male wage labor in the city, assumed the super-exploitation of women as the basis of industrial profit (cf.

Engels 1970). Women were in effect made to subsidize child rearing, schooling, and retirement—responsibilities generally associated with the state (see Bond 2005). This moves arguments about colonial domination some distance from the conceit that domination might be achieved solely by brute force. For, by and large, apartheid legislation focused on the regulation of private behavior and the refashioning of African subjectivity through attempts to eviscerate potential spaces of intimacy such as home and family—domains generally deemed central to the achievement of self-definition. But this should hardly be surprising, since the mechanism of hegemony, as we have long been told (Gramsci 1971; cf. Williams 1977; Bourdieu 1977), operates on an ordinary plane, reflexively imposing its vision through the appropriation of elements in the everyday lives of its subjects; “in a quite literal sense, hegemony is habit forming” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: 23). Thus, if the state’s confrontation with African people in the city dwelt on seemingly commonplace matters of housing, location, and employment, these were after all the very terms and conditions of the “reproduction of social labor” (Ngwane 2003: 683).

I mention this now decades-old debate in order to draw some important connections between the past and the contemporary moment. Consider the ways in which apartheid political economy necessarily depended on the African domestic space as a sphere in which certain responsibilities for the reproduction of social labor were assumed. I previously suggested that stokvels and other financial strategies relied as much on the institutional structure of the stokvel itself as the affective relations of its members on one hand and the affective relations within households on the other. That in a sense, as much as the apartheid economy required women to subsidize aspects of social reproduction, today, under neoliberalism, women and families more generally occupy a new, but not dissimilar role. The focus of efforts is largely redistributive more than productive in any conventional sense. In a post-wage age in which households generate resources through activities in the so-called informal economy (operating small street stands, taking in laundry, through odd casual labor such as gardening and construction work) or through social grants (pensions and child welfare grants), other kinds of labor are instrumental to the careful sharing and dissemination of meager resources. And this in and of itself becomes a critical coping strategy at a time of state devolution: a logic of delayed gratification by which lump sums are converted into a steady trickle—what Karl Polanyi described as “redistribution writ small” (cf. Polanyi 2001).

The Space of Modes of Production

Today, migrants traveling between the Eastern Cape and the Cape Peninsula follow in the footsteps of those who arrived in South Africa’s urban cen-

ters during previous centuries. The steady proletarianization of the South African countryside in the nineteenth century (Bonner 1983; Bundy 1979; Van Onselen 1996; Beinart, Delius and Trapido 1986) paved the way for the expansion of migrant wage labor in the twentieth century as the Union of South Africa stepped onto the world economic stage following the discovery of mineral wealth in the 1860s and 1870s. These productive forces heralded the advent of apartheid wage work after 1948 and its rationalization through so-called “pass laws”¹³ (Posel 1991).

Nowadays, people continue to arrive in the city from the countryside, but they do so in the face of very significant odds as large segments of the job market have been eliminated; many positions have been casualized and workers are left under-employed; and a steady emphasis on financialization has expanded that sector to 20 percent of the total economy (OECD, n.d.), while employing a mere 1 percent of the workforce. Many have suggested a worldwide transition in the regime of accumulation—from Fordism to post-Fordism (Harvey 1989; cf. Ong 1999). While the focus on finance capital has ushered in a very particular set of economic strategies: speculation and truck in credit being pervasive and forms of “fictitious capital” (Harvey 1989: 332), namely the production of value outside or beyond conventional productive processes, in its turn transforming the fundamental structure of market economies under neoliberalism (LiPuma and Lee 2004).

These transformations account in part for South Africa’s rocky transition while this postrevolutionary and postcolonial society faces other very specific challenges. Recently, arguing that the contradictions of neoliberal capitalism readily surface far and wide, Jean and John Comaroff have rightly qualified that such contradictions are often “most visible in so-called postrevolutionary societies—especially those societies that, having been set free by the events of 1989 and their aftermath, entered the global arena with distinct structural disadvantages” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 298).

Unemployment, as I have already suggested, has been one such consequence of the South African transition. And thus one of the issues this chapter seeks to address is the new political space of the city, in its specifically postcolonial dimensions, as a site in which, despite high levels of joblessness—despite the disarticulation of employment opportunities from processes of urbanization (see M. Davis 2006)—the city remains a destination for migrants. These are not the migrant workers who headed for South Africa’s cities as a consequence of industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century, nor are they those who worked in “metropolitan South Africa” but were forced to make their homes in the Bantustans during apartheid. Yet clearly, the continual movement back and forth between town and country has inscribed its own logic of sustainability—perhaps less material than existential. People have become habituated to the constant motion and migration between rural outpost and

urban center where many choose to settle. Moreover most retain a firm grasp on rural life, insisting on the burial of kin in the countryside and on returning to the ancestral homestead, particularly in times of need. This “culture of mobility” (Ngwane 2003) and the forms to which this movement has given rise signal processes of place making and belonging at work in both rural and urban areas simultaneously. Arguably, such journeys also suggest that modes of production thinking alone can only partially explain the constant movement back and forth between town and country. For if, in the previous century, jobs were the primary draw for migrant workers and if, in the current century, urbanization is no longer coterminous with employment, what motivates such movements must necessarily be explained not solely by recourse to theories of accessibility to cheap labor-power. Such abstractions necessarily efface historical processes of creative and cultural struggle (Trouillot 1995), and thereby fail to acknowledge, simply put, relationships to place, practices of meaning making, and the historical agency of those who construct local worlds within a larger world system.

At the same time, if the kinds of modes of production arguments I have presented here have left us an important legacy, we need to better understand the kinds of *geographies* that apartheid produced—its unified schemas stretching between urban and rural poles—as much as the dynamics of movement these produced. Informal settlements, like the one at the center of my account, provide a particularly privileged space in which to analyze ongoing urban struggles and historic renegotiations of how to live in the city, even at its margins.

This is a question Michael Watts has recently posed in relation to the inner city. Indeed, what is it about inner cities more or less everywhere that has come to define them as both sites of the production of new political forms and powerful concretizations of the lived contradictions of late capitalism (Watts 2005)—of consumer desire and disappointment, of access to formal though rarely substantive citizenship (Holston 1999)? More important, if modes of production can be said to explain certain overdeterminisms of social action but cannot account for the ways in which social agents constitute and reconstitute their lives often in ways thoroughly inexplicable in material terms—what Watts has referred to as the economist’s “wage puzzle” (2005: 189)—what work does culture do in sustaining lives seemingly so close to the brink? Stephen Jackson has recently observed that in the Democratic Republic of Congo lifeworlds within and yet somehow also beyond the long shadow cast by civil war continue and persist through *système D* (or *système de se débrouiller*)—a mode of fending for oneself—as a driving force in daily life. Here people are not merely “making do,” they are actively debating the changing forms of the social person and social reproduction more generally. Hence, even while acknowledging a lengthy Congolese crisis, Jackson argues compellingly of the

ways in which African agents daily make possible the “continuation of creativity within collapse” (S. Jackson 2005: 2).

Conclusion

Women, their families, and extended households who live in places like Lower Crossroads rely on multiple strategies for ensuring that the life cycle of the household is perpetuated. Stokvels are just one example among many financial mechanisms for doing so. Other strategies include participation in formal banking and credit institutions, loan-sharking, membership in multiple savings schemes simultaneously, and burial societies. Despite the fact that members of Ayaka’s scheme became increasingly indebted over time, arguably, theirs was neither reckless nor profligate behavior. Rather, a very careful calculus of the ways in which money might be managed, and most specifically channeled into certain endeavors, went into the provisioning of domestic life, even if this required entering into debt relations to do so. To be sure, these activities depend on the constitution of a certain kind of self-regulating subject, a “responsible and moral individual and economic-rational actor” (Lemke 2001: 201). Members often spoke of “belt-tightening” strategies, comments consistent with discourses of self-empowerment that have become pervasive in the context of the devolution of state welfare functions onto private institutions. While it is easy enough to argue that these are compensations for the failures of the market such discourses are equally legible as the means through which neoliberal subjects seek to transcend their existing frames of reference. Thus, while narratives of frugality and self-restraint expose the limits to social reproduction, they simultaneously highlight the myriad ways in which subjects act upon the constraints of neoliberalism and in so doing reshape the very structures of austerity and fiscal discipline. These are not only moral-rational subjects then, but subjects with a highly pragmatic orientation (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 66) to the lived world—never entirely submissive or subjected. The circumstances of their lives are immiserated in some material sense, but pragmatic subjects necessarily work *within* abjection, steadily redefining its conditions at every turn, exquisitely remaking the world around them, and at the same time debating the limits and limitations of their own conditions of possibility (see Makhulu 2009 forthcoming).

One additional question with which this chapter has been concerned is the urban context in which specific material struggles are unfolding and the city is both a site of possibility and promise, impossibility and disappointment. And while participation in financial schemes is in no way contextually specific to the city, there is an urban politics at work in the ways in which migrants, former migrants, and their extended linkages between town and country persist. Michel de Certeau long made the claim that the city was both the formulaic vision of spatial planning as well as the space of reinvention and

reconstitution through everyday practices (1988). And that “ordinary practitioners” in the city might transcend the opposition between powerless individual subject and the totalizing city to create another kind of experience.

I began this chapter with an epigraph taken from Thomas Holt’s book *The Problem of Freedom*, which explores the politics and experience of Jamaican emancipation. What he insistently argues is that freedom is definitionally dependent not only on abstract notions of democracy and liberalism, but also on a material ground as the conditions of possibility of true emancipation. South African freedom came late as I suggested; late in the sense of emerging after the world had so radically changed that definitionally “freedom” meant something else. It is this ongoing struggle to define “freedom” not only as deregulation nor simply as the formal proceduralism of democracy, but as substantively material that will, I would propose, continue to delimit the struggle for emancipation in South Africa and so many other postrevolutionary societies.

Chapter 9

Neoliberal Cultural Heritage and Bolivia's New Indigenous Public

ROBERT ALBRO

Great idlers, gamblers, and thieves, who did nothing else but drink to excess, waste time instead of work, strum instruments, and sing. They do not remember God or king, nor any service for better or ill from them. They have no humility, charity, or doctrine, but only pride . . . traitors even to treason, they go with knives and daggers, with garrotes and with stones.

—*Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala*, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615)

In 1985, Bolivia's national project radically shifted its purpose. In response to snowballing economic misfortune, the government applied an "orthodox shock"—faithfully following the Washington Consensus formula under the rubric of the "New Economic Policy." As in other countries adopting neoliberal reforms, the new policy grafted free market goals of fiscal austerity onto an ongoing democratization,¹ but eventually combining them with significant top-down multicultural reforms. The New Economic Policy brought a record inflation under control by dramatically shrinking Bolivia's public sector, privatizing state-owned industries, decentralizing government, and deregulating trade. These reforms shifted the economic environment from one of Fordist production to one of flexible accumulation. The downsizing of the public sector translated into massive layoffs of public employees, primarily from the large mining industry.² Reforms hit the popular sectors hardest, accelerating growth of the informal economy and significantly debilitating the effectiveness of the state patronage machine. In this chapter I am concerned with one of the unintended effects of Bolivia's process of neoliberal reform: the emergence of new popular subjects and expressions of political power as a result of the privatization of heritage.

Bolivia's post-structural adjustment landscape took shape in stages and

boasted wide-ranging legislation. One important feature was the state's effort to downsize the public sector through various strategies of decentralization that included significant multicultural reforms. In 1994 the passage of the Popular Participation Law (PPL) offered new possibilities for indigenous inclusion in the public life of the nation, alongside a constitutional redefinition of Bolivia as "multiethnic and pluricultural."³ This law recognizes a degree of political autonomy of indigenous communities and grassroots organizations in the terms of "customary law" (*usos y costumbres*). With customary law as the basis and the terms of recognition establishing indigenous peoples as state subjects, popular participation in public life is now promoted via the intersection of "culture" with "citizenship" (see Rosaldo 1997). As a result, local political and economic goals are more directly linked to legal entitlements expressed in multicultural terms. In practice, this has encouraged local municipalities to promote their own cultural resources as new expressions of provincial or municipal development. This promotion depends upon the folkloric performance of local cultural identity. One result of all this is that local claims to state-derived cultural rights have led to what I will call here the privatization of cultural heritage, as a commodified expression of municipal development.

In the first part of this chapter I review projects of Bolivian nation building since the revolution of 1952 to explore the present legacy of the successive but also competing projects of 1952 and 1985 respectively. Bolivia's post-1952 national project is still with us in various forms. This includes the state's promotion of "national integration" through folkloric performances. But the meaning of these performances has been complicated by different effects of post-1985 *neoliberal multiculturalism*, particularly by the systematic privatization of heritage. And since 2006 the promotion of an indigenous-based project of economic redistribution and constitutional reform by the government of Evo Morales promises yet further transformation of the significance of folkloric performance. Alcida Ramos (2002) and Charles Hale (2002) have identified how the privatizing logic of so-called neoliberal multiculturalism can also transform the identity politics of indigenous movements. Far from contradictory, multicultural reform programmatically extends the goals of neoliberalism in a variety of specific ways. At a minimum, multicultural reform is intended to address inefficiencies in centralized government decision making by encouraging greater citizen participation. It is also designed to help shrink the public sector and to extend local authority, redefining former state resources as municipal "property."

However, as Hale in particular has argued (2004), neoliberal multiculturalism also limits the political projects of cultural minorities and indigenous peoples by extending to them legal recognition only in ways commensurate with the goals of the state. But legal recognition alone does not fully capture the wanderings of what we can call the "fugitive character of agency,"⁴ which I highlight here by tracking the internal relations between the neoliber-

eral and multicultural faces of Bolivian reform, as potent sites of agency open to ethnographers. These relations are shaped by successive national cultural projects that confront each other in ways unexpected by policy framers that also produce unintended effects. In what follows, I examine the activities of local *culture houses* in ethnographic terms, as key sites where the construction of political subjecthood takes place through the performative transformation of cultural identity into a marketable resource in neoliberal terms.

In the process, these same neoliberal and cultural technologies of self-making have turned heritage into something at once desirable and publicly available, while inadvertently fostering the emergence of direct action protests that have repeatedly contested the state's authority in recent years (Postero 2005). In fact, the unprecedented rise of Evo Morales—of indigenous Aymara descent—to the Bolivian presidency in 2006 crucially depended upon successful coalition building within and across popular social sectors most negatively affected by neoliberal measures and powerfully informed by concerns for indigenous rights and grievances (Albro 2006). These coalitions represent the political agency of members of Bolivia's growing informal economy, lower and popular classes, workers, inhabitants of the urban periphery, and parts of the middle class, now willing to embrace an indigenous Andean identity made more available and claimable—if in neoliberal form—as a consumer-driven and personal cultural heritage resource.

Echoes of the Revolution of 1952

Bolivia's 1952 revolution ushered in a nation-building project that I will identify, for simplicity's sake, as a project of *mestizaje*—in brief, racial, cultural, and class “mixture” (H. Klein 1993). The 1952 revolution remains a bellwether for the ways Bolivians mark their country's pursuit of the elusive trappings of *modernity*. In this chapter I am concerned with the ways that the hovering events of 1952 continue to frame Bolivia's most recent national project, typically described as *neoliberal democratization*. Usually understood as an abrupt top-down government implementation of structural adjustment measures in 1985, this project is persistently discussed by advocates and critics alike as unconsolidated, still ongoing, as incomplete, or perhaps as discontinued under Morales.⁵ In fact the stark realization of this incompleteness among frustrated ordinary Bolivians has provoked considerable social turmoil and pervasive political conflict since 2000, while protest movements have offered an impromptu popular referendum on the inadequacies of democratization in Bolivia (García Linera 2003). But national projects are in a state of perpetual incompleteness. A comparison of the particularities of *mestizaje* (identified with the recently superseded project of 1952) to the post-1985 neoliberal project in Bolivia helps us to understand why neoliberalism is still, and perhaps will always be, unfinished. Moreover, it makes us aware of the productive political

potential of the tension between successive national projects, as shifting loci of experience and popular agency, facilitating the articulation of new alignments of *the popular* with indigenous heritage.

My method here will be to compare successive nation-building projects in terms of the ways the backstage sometimes takes problematic shape for the public as it is brought to the forefront (see Goffman 1959). Successive national projects have not conclusively defined the possibilities for public participation in national politics, and this is decisive for the cultural production of political alternatives. In part, it is the lingering effects of other national projects—with their competing accounts of how best to connect a citizenry to its heritage—that contribute to the nagging incompleteness of any one prospect. The same process contributes to the construction of potential alternatives, if often described from the vantage point of a status quo as illegitimate, or dangerous, and if often taking the form of bottom-up social movements.

This comparison will reveal how shifts in the location and framing of public culture can contribute to emergent political projects that are often opposed to the state's own national project, undermining it in direct and indirect ways. Therefore, I pay attention to how problematic and stigmatized identities become politically visible from one project to the next through the relocation of heritage. In this pursuit I use Michael Herzfeld's (1997) discussion of the ways that cultural intimacy can create "external embarrassments" for the state, in order to track some visible effects of the fragility, or incompleteness, of successive chapters of nation building. My discussion is an ethnographic exploration of both "unconsolidated" democracy in Latin America (see Agüero and Stark 1998) and of the constitution of popular democratic alternatives through neoliberalism.

My present consideration of the framing, and transformation, of shifting zones of *publicness* across successive efforts to define the content of national identity is one means of examining national projects as specific cultural projects, at once mutually dependent upon each other through contrastive enactments and vulnerable to each other's enactments. Successive projects are never entirely successful in pushing their predecessors fully out of public view. Even as superseded, these projects frame the possibilities for their successors. Any treatment of Bolivia's neoliberal democratization as a cultural project, therefore, requires that we search out zones of contact, controversy, and moments of the confounding of national identity, in successive efforts to define the "public" of the nation-state and the nation-state in the public.⁶

The "public" I have in mind here is more than just a deliberative arena or zone of cultural debate (cf. Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988; Habermas 1989). I refer here primarily to the ways cultural frames acquire political relevance on the national stage, understood in terms of a negotiation of the relation of public to private as these terms are culturally constructed. I want to go on to compare the post-1952 configuration of public and private to a

very different cultural configuration prevailing since 1985 in Bolivia's post-neoliberal period. On the one hand, I am concerned with the ways states invest themselves in the monopolization of symbolic currency of the public sphere as a way to create "the people" as "a public" (Geertz 1980; Anderson 1991). I am also interested in the specific claims about the "private," as promoted by the terms of neoliberal reform, with the downsizing and privatization of the public sector as the prevailing formula for modern democratic consolidation (see Phillips 1998).

"Indios" in the Post-1952 National Project

If unique in its particulars, Bolivia's version of *mestizaje* is comparable to similarly named efforts throughout South America or to the process of *ladinoización* in Central America. These are all projects undertaken during the latter half of the twentieth century as efforts to consolidate a Latin American version of the "modern" nation-state (see de la Cadena 2000). For present concerns, I want to provide a brief discussion of the relationship between *mestizaje* and Bolivian nation-building of a postrevolutionary sort as a means of illustrating the relationship between successive state projects, the changing status of indigenous identity, and its shifting public location as part of a new elaboration of Bolivian nationhood.

To what does post-1952 *mestizaje* in Bolivia refer? On the one hand, it was part and parcel of the enfranchisement of marginal Indian populations after the revolution, who were most conspicuously given the right to vote, to education, and who became the subjects of a large-scale agrarian reform effort. Bolivia's post-1952 social architects understood *mestizaje* as a process of the assimilation of potentially disruptive internal differences with the goal of producing a desirable ethnically and culturally mixed middle class. As a part of this effort, *indios* were officially renamed *campesinos* (peasant agriculturalists). The popular conformance to a homogeneous *mestizo* ideal was a key step toward creating a "national-popular" citizenry. Access to the state for indigenous peoples was channeled through informal vertical relations of patronage and clientage, where "indigenous clients" unofficially and anonymously supported the new government. If after 1952 *bruto indio* remained everywhere a predominantly backward, rural, and insulting, term of reference in the present tense, it was also supposed these same Indians would soon disappear from public view, transformed into industrious, middle-class, *mestizo* penny capitalists and new citizens of the Bolivian state.⁷

Intimately connected to the project of *mestizaje* was a more explicit program of the active promotion of Bolivia's national cultural identity using the familiar devices of folklore. In keeping with postrevolutionary policies of state centralization, and following a regional Latin American approach, the ownership of national folklore was vested in the state and matters of cultural policy were

handled through the government's new Ministry of Education and Culture. The so-called Indian question was relegated to an entirely different Ministry of Peasant Affairs. With this model of governance, indigenous cultural subjects were thus institutionally separated from their ostensible cultural expressions. Folkloric production mostly took the form of what today the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) likes to call "intangible cultural heritage," an international process in which the Bolivian government itself has taken a significant hand over the years. This has been one important front in Bolivia's effort to define the state's proprietary rights over any and all national cultural production.

Though a small, impoverished, and landlocked country of less than ten million people, Bolivia has been disproportionately active in the arena of international cultural heritage policy. In 1968, when heritage protection was as yet largely ill-defined in international terms, Bolivia passed a precedent-setting Supreme Decree (No. 08396) establishing a "sole copyright approach" to its national folklore, "whereby ownership and control of certain works became vested in the state" (Sherkin 2001: 43). In response both to the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (which made no provisions for so-called intangible cultural heritage), and to the appropriation of the song "El Condor Pasa" in the early 1970s by Western musicians like Simon and Garfunkel, in 1973 the Bolivian government requested a protocol be added to the Universal Copyright Convention to "protect the popular arts and cultural patrimony of all nations" (Sherkin 2001: 44). The Bolivian action set in motion a UNESCO process, still underway, to develop a more suitable international instrument for the protection of national cultural heritage.

One guidepost for this process is UNESCO's current list of "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity," inaugurated in 2001. Among the nineteen masterpieces originally proclaimed was the Oruro Carnival of Bolivia. Oruro's carnival is a yearly large-scale pre-Lenten festival celebrated in this highland Andean mining city. Mixing, as it does, Andean and non-Andean cultural expressions, the carnival is a classic example of what anthropologists used to call religious syncretism. As the proclamation for inclusion of Oruro's carnival as a world heritage masterpiece explained, this festival originated via a pre-Columbian ceremony associated with the Uru people, transformed by "Christian elements and borrowings from the medieval mystery plays," which in the process turned "Andean divinities" into "saints" (UNESCO 2001: 10/11). The familiar colonial superimposition of folk Catholic "saints" atop pre-Columbian Andean "deities" is one widely recognized enactment of *mestizaje*. Over the years the Bolivian government has actively pursued international recognition and protection of *mestizaje* as an official representation of national culture through such agencies as UNESCO.

Bolivia's national identity has largely been predicated on folkloric specta-

cles of its Andean origins. If such expressions of national folklore illustrated Bolivia's "national character," the cultural production of folklore was officially interpreted in the terms of *indigenismo*. Inspired by the writings of such figures in neighboring Peru as Valcárcel and Mariategu, Bolivian organic intellectuals and *indigenistas* such as Franz Tamayo and Jesús Lara celebrated in print the past greatness of the Inca and Tiwanaku civilizations as the direct ancestors of the modern Bolivian state. Of course, as suggested by the phrase "Inca sí, Indio no!" present indigenous realities of marginalization were ignored while a folkloric Andean past was memorialized. The arts and letters of *indigenismo* were very much a part of the way that "heritage" was retrospectively, and publicly, constructed to sustain the national cultural project (see Salmón 1997).

Even in the *indigenista* mode, and insofar as it was possible to do so, the state's effort was given over to erasing the signs of a contemporary indigenous identity from the public sphere as meaningfully relevant to the national project. And the influences of this project of the construction of Bolivia's post-1952 public cultural identity reached deeply into the interpersonal world of the family in a myriad of ways. People I knew as adults, but who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, often related stories to me of being the first to go to school in their family, embarrassed by their illiterate "campesino" parent, who would pick them up from school but walk them home without exchanging words and at a discreet distance.

Since the 1950s, and along with folkloric parades called *entradas*, characteristic dances, and foods, creole music has now come to be an organic part of regional Bolivian fiestas like Oruro's carnival, the festival of Gran Poder in La Paz, as well as the fiesta of Urkupiña in Quillacollo. In 1970 the Bolivian government declared Oruro the "Folklore Capital of Bolivia." In 1986, in a friendly rivalry, it declared the fiesta of Urkupiña to be the "Festival of National Integration." As these efforts suggest, in the words of colleague Daniel Goldstein (2004: 135), Oruro's carnival and comparable regional festivals serve an important identity-building function "for the formation of a Bolivian national identity predicated on folklorized images of indigeness." The official and public syncretism of carnival is illustrative of the Bolivian state's post-1952 cultural policy based upon the expectations of *mestizaje*. Throughout the post-1952 period, "folklore" was a type of cultural property and a public asset of the nation-state. And the state understood its responsibility for the protection and management of culture as a public asset.

This brief account of the Bolivian state's cultural projects after 1952 is far from comprehensive. But it does help us to identify a series of important characteristics of those projects. Most obviously, the sweeping—and undeniably historic—enfranchisement of Bolivia's majority Indian population was contingent upon rendering invisible an indigenous politics potentially autonomous from state authority. During this era the state's project was invested

in the public construction of national culture heritage as folklore, a process underwritten by Indian identity in the past tense. This effort also involved transforming indigenous cultural subjects into anonymous “clients” of the state, and separating cultural subjects from their own cultural production—now idealized through programs of national folklore. But if this effort, indeed, reached deep into people’s everyday lives, and if the 1952 revolution was perhaps the most defining moment in modern Bolivian history, its effects were certainly not total.

Backstage in the Theater of 1952

If they were anonymous, how were these clients—so important for the vertical cohesion of the state apparatus—publicly culturally categorized? Among the influential accounts of this era of Bolivian history is James Malloy’s 1970 book *The Uncompleted Revolution*. As the title suggests, Bolivia’s nation builders encountered institutional stumbling blocks in the effort to implement a new vision for the Bolivian state. The cultural expression of this project suffered, in Herzfeld’s (1997: 3) terms, the “external embarrassment” of the infamous *cholo*. For the sake of this discussion, I might provisionally gloss “cholo” as a disparaging reference to an upwardly mobile urban Indian. But this helps us only so much. Neither “indio” nor “mestizo,” cholos are imagined to be caught in the act, the process, of *becoming*—either as middle class, or mestizo, or citizen in good standing. As cholos are talked about—stigmatized, untrustworthy, vulgar, dangerous—they become unstable moderns. Cholos are at once necessary clients of the state. But this very identity category—*cholo*—is also a public sign of the fragility of the 1952 narrative of nationhood. At once key cultural brokers, in transit, and iconoclastic, cholos are florid reminders of undesirable schisms, fissures, and convergences of Andean and Spanish worldviews, Indian and elite, assimilation or rejection of the national project, as they disrupt the middle-class promise of ethnic and class homogeneity.⁸

Given their stereotypical notoriety, cholos directed systematic attention to the backstage of state practices. In the relations of patronage and clientage informally underwriting the stability of the post-1952 Bolivian state, the “clients” were for the most part “cunning cholos,” a term widely used to describe the cadre of indigenous leaders with regular access to the upper reaches of government throughout the 1950s to 1970s. Significantly urban, economically enterprising, and politically ambitious, these people were much more visible than the anonymous Indians it was hoped would soon become productive national citizens. But this was a problem. The “cholo politician,” as Alcides Arguedas informs us (1937: 59–61), is “false and unstable in his ordinary principles.” Franz Tamayo (1944: 69) describes him as “instinctively animated by the spirit of the sheep in a flock,” and as a “clay easily molded by the crazy schemes and ambitions” of demagogues. About cholos, friends

exclaim, "Among the blind, the one-eyed is king." In politics, the cholo lacks principles, they say, and is both "with the Moors and the Christians." For these reasons, as a client the cholo is also considered dangerous—as parasitical, invested in political graft, and as rapaciously pursuing the largesse of his political patron. In short, he is untrustworthy, yet in his person directing attention to the fault lines and contrived nature of Bolivia's post-1952 national project. The fortunes of post-1952 nation building, then, rested uneasily on the reciprocal support of these cunning cholos.

As the quote from the colonial chronicler Guamán Poma at the outset of this chapter suggests, the cholo embarrasses Bolivia's national project particularly in the ways that public attention becomes transfixed on the apparent moral failures, criminality, and corruption of this shifty figure. "Cholo" is a universal term of insult and stigma. It refers to pretensions of upward mobility, of financially successful, uppity, urbanized Indians. Cholos are often described as "mean" (*malo*), "aggressive" (*prepotente*), "rude" (*malcriado*), or "tricky" (*pícaro*). Cholos are assumed to lack a clear paternity and to readily turn on their own class. The cholo is accused of being a self-serving individualist. Less an identity, the term has been called a "taxonomic anomaly" (J. G. Nugent 1992: 77). Rhetoric of the 1960s era *indigenista* Fausto Reinaga (1964: 27, 65, 218) has described the cholo as a "soul broken in two," as carrying a "perversity deep in his blood," making him for Reinaga a "creator and executor of evil."

At the same time, emergent from among the free smallholders (called *pique-ros*), artisans, and shopkeepers living in provincial towns of the early twentieth century (see Larson 1998), the cholo sensibilities underwrote the new, and significantly rural, entrepreneurial class the state imagined would quickly come to form a thriving "middle class," the class equivalent to the public cultural project of *mestizaje*. More so than elsewhere in Bolivia, the rural markets of Cochabamba experienced an expansion after the revolution, in part through the appearance of new figures in the market arena: "Together with the exodus of the *hacendado* [large landowning] sector, one sees the arrival of a primarily commercial sector of mestizos: those from the provincial valley towns, which are called 'vallunos,' and those from the city of Cochabamba, whom rural people call 'cholos.' These are *rescatistas* [traders], truck drivers, and *chicheros* [producers of corn beer]. This group, together with the union leaders of the immediate postrevolutionary epoch, seems to have fixed itself as the socio-economic patron of the future" (Barnes de Marschall and Torrico 1971: 144). The necessary market stimulus, in short, was to be provided by these town-folk, *vallunos*, and city folk—or cholos. In this account, their cleverness and business acumen allowed enterprising cholos to claim the economic status of middleman and to connect the rural to the urban, the agricultural market to the urban consumer, while also helping to connect up the cultural map of the national territory itself with their regular movement back and forth through the emerging system of rotating provincial markets. Cholo sensibilities are

not simply male traits. The intimidating, aggressive, bilingual, business savvy *chola* market woman has come to typify the entrepreneurial sensibilities of Bolivia's rising provincial middle class.⁹

The provincial place of business most associated with the *chola* market woman has been without doubt the *chichería*. These are local watering holes that serve the ubiquitous *chicha* (corn beer). Chicherías have been a staple of the regional economy since well before 1952. And cholos, we are told, are particularly vulnerable to moral lapses or vices, with drinking to excess at the top of the list. In his polemic on the nation's moral flaws, *Pueblo enfermo* (A Sick People), the writer Alcides Arguedas (1937) says of Bolivia's cholo, "His favorite place is the chichería." And during the mid-twentieth century, citing concerns for hygiene, the city of Cochabamba undertook regular public health campaigns to remove chicherías from their prominent location in the city's central square (see Rodríguez and Solares 1990). As one regional journalist describes, "It is certain that during Republican times [that is, prior to 1952] the Plaza 14th of September [Cochabamba's principal plaza] was surrounded by chicherías, where the gabble of cholos and artisans was heard, offering political conjectures and playing the *charango*. But later on, urban growth and the social segregation of 'modernization,' relegated these spaces to the periphery. Today, the chichería is demonized and is synonymous with marginality" (Medrano 2002). Drawing connections between stigma and dirt, cholos are very much cultural "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966: 35). With the publicity that formed the very goal of these hygiene campaigns, however, the excesses of the cholo became enshrined as a matter of public record.

These publicly disrespectful urban Indians at once drew attention to the intimate machinations of state patronage even as they embarrassed the nation—regular reminders of the present realities of Indians, of Indians in motion, in cities, and in politics, despite regular state efforts to erase public signs of their existence. Part of a public underbelly of Bolivia's national project, cholos confirmed the destabilizing difference introduced by the Andean present into national life even if cholos, themselves, were supposed to reject their own heritage. Of course such a separation of cultural subjects from their cultural heritage was very much a result of the state's project. But these figures had little place in the state's own folkloric narrative of the nation.

"Popular Participation" in the Post-1985 National Project

Neoliberal reform in Bolivia took various forms, including new decentralization measures, represented by the Organic Municipal Law (OML) revised in 1985. I was able to observe the effects of decentralization while conducting fieldwork on popular political coalition building in the provincial capital of Quillacollo in the mid-1990s.¹⁰ Previously, a state-run regional development corporation managed the budgets of provincial or local municipalities, but

now budgetary control passed directly into the hands of the local mayor's office. Even further, the new OML specifically defined municipal resources as *patrimonio* (or "patrimony"—both collective inheritance and property). The mayor is now charged with the particular goal of promoting "the cultural development and defense of popular and autochthonous values." Formerly simply an "extension" of the mayor's office, the new "department of culture" (in Quillacollo under way in 1986) is given the explicit purpose of the "promotion of weekly markets [*ferias*]," as well as "control over the exploitation of [the province's] patrimony." According to a longtime employee of Quillacollo's "culture house," as they are called, in practice this is an effort "to promote culture, to preserve the agricultural markets, and to maintain the tradition of the Sunday fair." A state-driven strategy of decentralization, in short, has promoted the greater fiscal autonomy of local governments contingent upon a definition of local cultural assets as property. This measure was further enhanced by 1994's Popular Participation Law, which consolidated the category of cultural patrimony or heritage as a basis for local political claim making in Bolivia, effectively aligning economic and political goals at the local or municipal level.

Since 1986, throughout the provincial towns of Cochabamba, "folklore festivals" have become a weekly affair. Now comprising a yearly calendar, these festivals—called *ferias*, as with the traditional agricultural markets—promote a specific cultural product that is considered a particular specialty or patrimony of the host town. Festival themes have proliferated over the years, with a special emphasis on agricultural goods and their "derivatives," including corn, apples, peaches, milk, *huarapo* (a local drink), *puchero* (a carnival food), *wallunk'as* (a Day of the Dead activity), and chicha, among many others. These fairs are explicitly framed as a provincial effort to "revive," "rescue," and "promote" "our culture"—variously identified as "*qhochala* culture," (that is, the cultural identity of Cochabamba's valley dwellers) or as the unique heritage of specific provincial towns in Cochabamba. They are also explicitly framed as heritage events concerned with "our patrimony"—the vital relationship of the ancestral past to the present. The small town of Achamoco's now annual festival of the Ñawpa Manka Mikhuna—literally, "of the food of our grandparents [*abuelos*]" or "of the food of yesteryear [*antaño*]"—is one case in point. As advertised in the regional newspaper, the Ñawpa Manka Mikuna festival is a demonstration of "the great variety and rich food that formed part of the daily diet of our ancestors [*antepasados*]" (*Los Tiempos* 2001). The promotion of this "festival boom" has arguably become the primary task of local culture houses throughout the era of neoliberal multiculturalism.

These festivals are also self-consciously framed as an economic strategy of local municipalities and as embracing the convergence of a top-down pairing of privatization with decentralization. The following editorial makes this clear: "From the largest to the smallest municipalities, the festivals—of food,

artisanal, agricultural, and other products—are viewed as an alternative for generating regional economic momentum while facing the crisis affecting us all. They are an invitation to the populations of the capital city and of neighboring communities to visit these towns and to spend their Sundays in a different way” (*Los Tiempos* 2002). The primary goal is the unapologetic promotion of the products of traditional (but also not so traditional) regional industries. A crucial part of this goal is to create a consumer market for local cultural products by luring a largely urbanized regional population to more rural provincial towns in order to reconnect with “their own humble origins.” To be successful, then, these festivals encourage people to reformulate their relationship to their cultural heritage as consumers, as rooted in nonnational “places,” as “property,” but also as mobile—with people going from town to town. These post-1985 folklore festivals are public performances of the neoliberal privatization of heritage. They frame a consuming desire in cultural terms, as they exhibit the newly autonomous and self-regulatory efforts of local political interests to invest in themselves. This emergent heritage marketplace, however, has been superimposed atop the existing rotating agricultural markets, which have not at all disappeared. And the expectations of the latter can still unexpectedly reassert themselves over the former.

Initially, circa 1986, the job of organizing these festivals fell entirely to the local culture houses, with the mayor’s office contributing around 90 percent of the cost. Depending upon the annual success of a given festival, these costs are increasingly defrayed. The Milk Festival of 2001 in the zone of Tacata in Quillacollo was one of four that day throughout the provinces of Cochabamba. The Milk Festival was partly a promotional opportunity of the local milk farming industry—historically a provincial staple. This particular festival had been organized jointly by Quillacollo’s civic committee, a local training establishment for medical students, a veterinary and agronomy institute housed in the regional university, and the departmental union for radio and television. The “sponsors” (with each making financial contributions) included a variety of local industrial milk producers and vendors, with names like Nordland, Vigor, Stabílik, Milka, as well as one of Cochabamba’s larger companies, the Planta Industrializadora de Leche (Industrial Milk Plant), or PIL, as it is known. “Small milk producers,” or local dairy farmers, also paid ground rent to the mayor’s office to sell products directly, a relationship little different from the traditional weekly market. For those interested in a “taste” of their own heritage, people could choose from kiosks serving food and drink, including *fricasé*, *pichón*, *huarapo*, *chicha*, *chicharrón*, *p’ampaku*, and *ambrosia* (milk squeezed directly from the udder to the glass, to be mixed with cinnamon and a high proof alcohol), all the while listening to live folkloric music. One sign of the modest success of this “diversity marketing” (see Yúdice 2003) is that Quillacollo’s mayoralty now foots a much smaller proportion of the bill for such festivals. At the same time, as the number of

festivals rises, local cultural heritage is becoming increasingly diversified and privately subsidized.

Among the most popular of the post-1985 festivals is Quillacollo's yearly Chicha Festival. Even well before 1952, the "chicha tax" paid by prosperous brewers of chicha and owners of *chicherías*—themselves often *cholas*—accounted for a large percentage of the local municipal budget. Recall, however, that during the years following the 1952 revolution, *chicherías* were at once strongly linked to the moral perversities of the cholo and the subject of regular public campaigns to eliminate them. In the post-1985 climate of neoliberal multiculturalism, however, chicha has been significantly rehabilitated as a bankable heritage—now the so-called "nectar of the valley." The very first of these now regular festivals in 1986 included a presentation by a university faculty of sciences and technology proposing a formula to "scientifically" elaborate chicha, as part of the effort to "rediscover the productive potential of our provinces" (Medrano 2002). The annual "chicha colloquium," which I attended at Quillacollo's well-known *chichería* Chernovil in 1995, debated ways to "modernize the chicha industry," alongside the "cultural importance of chicha," the centrality of chicha in stimulating local "private enterprise," and as a vital part of "our traditional patrimony."

Chernovil's owner, initially an activist on behalf of Quillacollo's culture house, is quite vocal in explaining the goal of the town's cultural renaissance as a question of the "renovation of the cholo." The promotion of the *chichería* as a culturally significant place is central to this project. In his words, "It is the tutelary institution in Cochabamba. [*Chicherías*] are spaces where you can consume to the point of conviviality through drink [*borracheras sociales*], as spaces of social communication which bring people together." Not everyone agrees. Chernovil's owner has been accused of "profit-seeking intentions" by more than a few people, behavior they say that comes not "from our ancestors," and which will likely spell death for local culture. Many provincial cultural activists surely treat "profit seeking" as contrary to "revalorizing our cultural identity." But even they accept the neoliberal frame of diversity marketing, as instantiated in the new role of the provincial culture house. Their criticisms of shamelessly acquisitive behavior, however, resurrect of the post-1952 stigmatized cholo and his self-serving business acumen, now applied to post-1985 realities. Even as a promotional subject, the cholo, it seems, continues as a magnet for the expression of ambivalent cultural crosscurrents.

The current neoliberal era of "popular participation" reframes the "cunning cholo" in ways that much more publicly foreground the historically intimate connections of this figure to the market—as its middleman. As I have explored in detail elsewhere (see Albro 2000), this is most apparent with the role of *cholitas* (unmarried women who wear the signature gathered skirts) as individuals who convene these new festivals of the post-1985 neoliberal cultural marketplace. Idealized pictures of the *cholita* always grace advertising

materials for these festivals. People tell me, traditionally, it is the woman who does the inviting for any festival occasion. Planned festival events—singing contests, bicycle races, beauty pageants, food kiosks, and of course the serving of chicha—all feature the cholita as a central protagonist. Attending the Festival of the “Conejo Cuy” (guinea pig) with a friend in 2001, we observed what he called “disguised cholitas” (*disfrazadas*), who wore bright red mini-*polleras* (traditional skirts), high heels (not normally worn), with inexpensive prefab hats (normally no expense is spared). These cholitas stood in front of the kiosks with tiny glasses of *garapiña*, beckoning festival attendees to partake. My friend referred to these high school-aged girls as *chota cholas*, literally, women both traditional and modern at the same time—wearing Western and non-Western skirts. These young women, of course, did not normally wear the pollera, and looked very much like the cholitas who figure on the many glossy posters announcing an upcoming festival. In this context the figure of the chola has been resignified, from the rapacious and intimidating advantage-seeking businesswoman, corn trader, and chichería owner (but stigmatized, perhaps dangerous, and an unstable modern) to the linchpin of local diversity marketing, whose role is to invite people to embrace their *humble origins* through consumption and investment in the provincial cultural economy. Nevertheless, the new neoliberal market woman publicly trades on her backstage counterpart—still industriously working in the weekly agricultural fair.

Backstage in the Theater of the Present?

People in the municipality of Quillacollo exclaim, “We’re all cholos.” But they also rush to insist, “We don’t call each other cholos.” Even as they embrace it, the term remains for them a stigma. This is one way we can recognize the crosscurrents of competing state projects, as they inform people’s everyday lives. Euphemistically casting about for a way to refer to this ambivalent state of affairs, what people readily claim now is a status of humble origins (literally, *de origen humilde*). The term is quite different in its implications. Not long ago the cause of embarrassment as an indicator of an indigenous heredity the state sought to make invisible, nowadays people are all too willing to discuss their humble origins. One prominent local politician had this to say: “We all hope to improve things. It is normal and it is natural. And the environment, itself, promotes this, right? But this doesn’t mean that you forget who you have always been. Because a person’s upbringing is not based on material things. I am proud of what I am, of what I do, think, and feel. . . . My outside personality might change. . . . But within myself I do not change because I don’t forget my origins. I don’t forget my upbringing, and I do not forget my ancestors. It is something that I keep within, that I have for me. Outside I can change twenty thousand times. But these are superficial attitudes.” Here he embraces a local paternity or patrimony, but as an individual disposition. People explain, “I

continue to be who I am.” And they insist, “In the depth of my personality, I do not forget where I come from.” This egocentric status of “humble origins” asserts an autobiographical claim as a public statement about the private matter of heritage. A more collective “We” is, however, much more commonplace among an earlier generation of people, with long residence in Quillacollo, when discussing the province’s unique traits and particular history with me.

As my politician friend makes clear here and in other conversations, these ancestral origins are also construed in specifically cultural terms: “In reality Bolivia is, well, Quechua and Aymara. This is our reality. . . . Our ancestors have always fought for the recuperation of their own way of life, to escape from the slavery of exploitation without losing touch with our own cultural origins. I could never reject my native tongue, which is Quechua. I could never reject the sacred leaf, which is coca, and which is part of our culture. . . . It is part of a cultural identification and it is revolutionary.” Such statements reflect a reconciliation with one’s cultural heritage—as a conscious stance about chewing coca leaf or drinking in a *chichería* as a patrimonial right. The Bolivian critic Guillermo Mariaca (1998) describes such a disposition as “the modern citizen who does not want to stop being Indian—an urban, monied, educated Indian.” But we should also note that this is a mobile, noncollective, privatized kind of cultural heritage—a personal choice and a sign of the neoliberal reconversion of culture. As a newly desirable and personal matter, “heritage” is presented as a decision—even as a calculation—one can make. As active consumers of cultural identity, people who are particularly politically active are also active in the work of provincial culture houses helping people to “remember their humble origins” through weekly folklore festivals. But cultural reconversion is never complete.

The current leaders of Bolivia’s popular protest movements are in many ways latter-day incarnations of the “cunning cholos” intimately attached to the 1952 patronage state.¹¹ But rather than brokering the state’s access to its anonymous invisibly Indian political base, contemporary social movements self-consciously mobilize indigenous rights as a way to publicly frame their challenges to state authority. Unexpectedly since 2000 protesters have faced down the national government with demands for greater accountability regarding the privatization of Bolivia’s natural resources, particularly tin, water, and natural gas, in the terms of the state’s own decentralizing and multicultural reforms. Their slogans cast accountability as a question of national patrimony and of traditional *usos y costumbres*, or customary law (see Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe 2002). The many successes of these social movements are very public and embarrassing reminders for state authorities of the lack of a national consensus over the virtues of neoliberalism, dramatizing its inability to fully reconvert the citizenry into the mass consumer public called for by the neoliberal terms of national development. However, it is the state’s own neoliberal multiculturalism that has helped reposition cultural heritage as an

effective tool for the indigenous and popular coalition building so essential to the protest efforts. In regional spaces like Quillacollo, Bolivia's neoliberal policies have fostered new avenues of connection, and potential mobilization, between local cultural consumers and culture-driven claims upon the state. Heritage consumption has become one way to participate in Bolivia's current politics of protest. It remains to be seen if the administration of Evo Morales, as a onetime social movement leader, will successfully reconvert indigenous cultural heritage once again, as part of a constitutional basis for a new and more equitable political status quo in Bolivia.

Neoliberal multiculturalism has encouraged and helped circulate a "humble" cultural heritage as significantly consumer-oriented, mobile, and personal. This has effectively liberated cultural heritage from the former state monopoly, turning the customary law of cultural property into an available frame of mutual recognition for the cross-sector work of political coalition building. If classic *indigenismo* was an organic intellectual project mobilizing a glorious Inca past to serve the modern mestizo nation, the current tack of popular organizing reverses fields, promoting the contemporary social fact of an indigenous heritage across Bolivia's diverse popular sectors as an effective rallying point.

Chapter 10

Neoliberal Education

Preparing the Student for the New Workplace

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As Pierre Bourdieu (1998) put it, neoliberalism has become a “free trade faith.” As such, its tenets go beyond policies for privatization and profit maximizing into a reimagining of one’s very condition. The impact of neoliberalism, most strongly articulated in the corporate sector, has since the early 1980s come to saturate all other sectors, including government, nonprofit, health, and, as concerns me here, education. Americans have long perceived higher education as a vehicle for career preparation, but in the last quarter century, higher education, like U.S. education generally, has become increasingly restructured, reexamined, and subjected to outcomes-oriented and cost-reduction assessment. Students now go to college in an atmosphere saturated by a neoliberal imaginary, a frame of mind (socially speaking) characterized by an ethic of entrepreneurial self-management. In the neoliberal imaginary (Rossiter 2003), each person becomes his or her own product. Each person becomes responsible for parsing himself or herself into elements whose primary function is *productivity*—making profit for oneself and/or one’s organization. Undergraduate students encounter this ethic throughout their college career, more intensely as they near graduation and the job market. Career counseling centers provide upperclassmen with self-assessment devices and workshops that urge students to consider their personal skills inventories. In this conceptual frame, every piece of knowledge one acquires can be interpreted and assessed as a *skill*, an aspect of oneself that can be considered productive by prospective employers. *Skills* thus become a form of self-marketing, and students readily come to imagine themselves as bundles of skills.

Among the striking results of this subordination of learning to skill production is the reimagining and reification of *communication* and *diversity* as mutually coherent *skills*. In this chapter I examine how the U.S. neoliberal imaginary has framed these reimaginings, specifically in the context of higher education. In such a context, as in others where institutional practices are wrapped up in their conventions of self-description, discourse analysis, embedded in

the ethnography of real-world institutions, helps account for these reconceptualizations and for their seeming naturalness to so many Americans. Both *communication* and *diversity* have become pieces of selves that can be marketed as productive. *Communication* is commodified as a means of organizational efficiency, and *diversity* as an individual's contribution to the organization. The commodification of communication is nothing new. The now-flourishing diversity industry, on the other hand, emerged in the 1990s, in large part as a corporate response to affirmative action hiring policies. Much of what I address below is a consequence of that industry's effect on contemporary higher education. In particular, I address how contemporary liberal arts education is complicit in the process, initiated in the corporate sector, of shifting *diversity* from a quest for social justice grounded in the civil rights movement to a kind of social commodity.

What is neoliberalism and where did it come from? In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey describes the piecemeal process by which forms of privatization emerged, characteristically as "solutions" to perceived crises, a process that has resulted in the significant concentration of greater wealth in fewer hands over the past quarter century or so. Thus, neoliberalism emerged "as a potential antidote to threats to the capitalist social order and as a solution to capitalism's ills" (Harvey 2005: 19). Harvey traces the rise of such strategies since World War II, particularly in the 1970s to 1990s. The theorists of neoliberalism (including Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman) advocated and interpreted such moves as saving civilization by protecting personal freedom from any form of statist intervention—a theoretical framework that is not, Harvey notes, "entirely coherent" (2005: 21). The coherence emerges from the sense of moral imperative that these theorists engendered in their believers, particularly the sense of moral outrage at what is perceived as any restriction of private ownership and free enterprise (Harvey 2005: 37).

Pierre Bourdieu analyzes neoliberalism as a belief system that mystifies interests and power by making them articles of faith: "The neoliberal utopia tends to embody itself in the reality of a kind of infernal machine, whose necessity imposes itself even upon the rulers. . . . This utopia evokes powerful belief—the *free trade faith*—not only among those who live off it, such as financiers, the owners and managers of large corporations, etc., but also among those, such as high-level government officials and politicians, who derive their justification for existing from it" (Bourdieu 1998). The peculiar robustness of neoliberalism lies in the way it commands belief. While the particular configuration of elements that constitute that belief system is specific to this era of global capitalism, much of what grabs Americans about it is continuous with much older American cultural beliefs privileging the individual, technology, rationality, private enterprise, the market. Nor are the political and economic actions of allegedly neoliberal political and corporate leaders entirely consistent with the terms of this belief system. In the passage just cited, Bourdieu

points to the fate of education as a case in point of social systems restructured to fit a neoliberal belief system. Similarly, media theorist Ned Rossiter describes the reconceptualization of intellectual products: "There is a managerialist demand for the products of intellectual labour—knowledge coded as intellectual property, which makes possible the commodity object—to be accountable to the logic of exchange-value and market mechanisms. The neoliberal imaginary seeks to subject all socio-cultural practices to the laws of the market, which are one manifestation, albeit limited, of the logic of capital" (Rossiter 2003: 109). The unrelenting pressure to turn any form of knowledge into product has massively come to characterize discourses on education policy. Joel Spring (1998), in *Education and the Rise of the Global Economy*, spells out policies in the United States, Europe, and Asia by which educational processes are reconfigured and reconceptualized in ways coherent with corporate structures and interests. The form and practice of higher education, and increasingly its very existence, are justified insofar as higher education can be seen to play some instrumental role in a set of neoliberal schemata. These rationales and justifications manifest faith in a system imagined as natural, necessary, inevitable, and ultimately beneficial. To believers in such a system, it does not make sense *not* to believe in this utopia. Jean and John Comaroff focus on this passionately held, morally imperative quality of neoliberalism in their discussion of millennial capitalism, that is, "in its messianic, salvific, even magical manifestations" and its contradictions, such as "the fact that it appears both to include and to marginalize in unanticipated ways" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004: 177, 180).

This precise contradiction is particularly evident in the ways in which college and university administrations reconceptualize diversity: what started as an inclusive social movement becomes a market-valued line on an individual's résumé, a transformation routinely effected in the process of higher education. Knowledge about diversity is abundantly commodified, and once diversity is reconceptualized as a skill, communication quickly appears in the discursive mix. This is evident in a quick survey of the many diversity consulting, training, and management firms whose services are available to corporations, nonprofits, and educational institutions. One such firm, Cor Communications, puts the connection thus: "Skill building is critical to the success of any Diversity initiative, and the most essential skill is communication." (Cor Communications, n.d.)

The Neoliberal Cultural System

Neoliberalism constitutes a cultural belief system insofar as people believe its practices and policies to be utopic, even salvific. The neoliberal imaginary can thus be understood in terms of what David Schneider (1976) explained as a set of cultural symbols, conceptions about the world that seem to make

obvious, natural sense, that fit together in a coherent pattern that gives meaning to action. As Schneider (1980) pointed out in his study of U.S. kinship, the person is a defining unit of U.S. culture. Americans think not in terms of structures or collectives but individual motives and actions and particularly presuppose that the ideal individual is a model of self-control and rational choice, a key dimension of which is economic. The self-controlling individual as an internalization of rational order is also coherent with the privileging of the technological (Downey 1998), which is in turn coherent with belief in the transformative power of technique such as communication skills (Cameron 2000). The self-controlling person has long been the U.S. epitome of the ideal worker and is now the linchpin of the neoliberal imaginary. This concept of person is central to the industry of communication skills inculcation, which define such skills in terms of efficient task segmentation and completion. It is no surprise that diversity has similarly come to be understood as that which an individual possesses that contributes to the good of the organization. In her book *Implementing Diversity*, Marilyn Loden, a major figure in diversity management consulting and founder of the firm Loden Associates, provides what she calls a “a broad workable definition” of diversity as “those important human characteristics that impact individuals’ values, opportunities, and perceptions of self and others at work” (1996: 14). These are outlined on a “diversity wheel” (1996: 16) made up of primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. Primary dimensions originally included gender, ethnicity, mental/physical abilities and characteristics, race, age, and sexuality; the Loden Associates website has updated this list to include income, spiritual beliefs, and class (Loden Associates, Inc. n.d.). Loden espouses a policy of “valuing diversity” in the workplace, the aim of which is to maximize individual potential for an organization rather than focus primarily on group definition (Loden 1996: 21–23).

What gives these cultural assumptions such power is not their grounding in empirical reality, for which there is little systematic evidence, but their grounding as shared beliefs in private and public discourses. An Internet search on such terms as *communication*, *skills*, *diversity*, and *productivity* will turn up many, many examples in corporate, government, and educational discourses. It is through such continual and repeated discourses that these values become a commonsense network of understandings. They are thus best analyzed as a discursive system. One salient feature of such discourse is the use of *skills* as the second term of such two-noun phrases as *job skills*, *career skills*, *business skills*; *communication skills*, *listening skills*, *presentation skills*; *management skills*, *leadership skills*, *team skills*; and *diversity skills*, *personal skills*, *social skills*. The term *skill* itself denotes a technique that if properly inculcated should guarantee a positive outcome, generally characterized as increased productivity. The nouns that precede *skills* fall into the following categories: particular practices such as typing that show up in job descriptions or, conversely, generic practices that

enhance employability (job, career, business); informing or being informed, and/or persuading (communication, listening, presentation); working with others to get a job done (management, leadership, team); and interacting generally (personal, social).¹ Appending the word *skill* to a task or an aspect of a task highlights the sense of technique and control; appending it to personal practices or knowledge marks a reconceptualization of subjectivity: “Skills are the performance specifications of your product—you” (Minnesota Department of Economic Security n.d.) This is a refitting of self to suit market needs. This fits the notion of an ideal worker as a self-regulating work unit who internalizes the company’s task structure (Martin 1997).

I have elsewhere examined the emergence of *skills* as a dominant discourse in contemporary higher education, with *diversity* reimagined as a skill set (Urciuoli 2003, 2005, 2008). One striking feature of such discourse is the often fluid nature of their denotata. *Skills*, as I note above, does not consistently denote a particular practice or set of practices. When people use *skills* in a referring expression, it tends to align the discourse with a particular perspective on work and subjectivity, as if its primary message were the importance of restructuring oneself as an ideal worker, as we see on the Mind Tools Web site:

On the navigation bar above, you’ll find more than 100 essential life, career training and management training skills, freely available and outlined in easy to understand language. These skills are supported by simple examples and exercises that expand and reinforce your understanding.

Where you want to develop real strength in a career skills area, look at our in-depth self-development courses. These give you the real expertise you need to enjoy an excellent career. And for personal help, talk to our career and life coaches.

Backed by Mind Tools, discover the essential skills and techniques that help you excel in your career—whatever your profession. Learn leadership, personal effectiveness, goal setting, and stress management. Further, discover techniques that improve creativity, assist problem solving, organize time and deadlines, and improve your memory. (Mind Tools n.d.)

In working out the functions of such discourse, one must keep in mind who uses these terms, with whom, in what situations, reflecting what presuppositions, and clustered with what other related terms of reference. The discourse reflects not so much a set of references to objects and actions as a world of relationships organized by power and interest. For those not familiar with this approach to language, the most important thing to remember is that language is never assumed to reflect reality unproblematically or simplistically. Rather, the relation of discourse to one’s world emerges from the complex interplay of various elements of discourse to social relations as situated and structured by such factors as institutional, class, gender, race, and comparable principles of social organization and power distribution. Thus, every instance of actual language use indexes—connects to—those structural dynamics that gave rise to that speech situation.

Roman Jakobson (1960) conceptualized the use of language as a set of functions organized around the speaker, addressee, message form, message content, channel, and code. Any given utterance could be interpreted with respect to any of these elements, each interpretation being a distinct function. Thus, interpretation with respect to the message content is reference; with respect to the message form is rhetorical or poetic; with respect to the speaker is the speaker's self-presentation (feeling, opinion, authority, and so on); with respect to the addressee is directing the addressee to act or respond in some way; with respect to the channel is maintaining contact; and with respect to the code is defining or explaining the use of the language itself. Most acts of communication involve more than one function and the dominant function may not be the obvious one.

Building on Jakobson, Michael Silverstein (1976) further emphasized that the conventionally labeled functions associated with language use (e.g., referring, persuading, arguing) might not match what actually transpires in a communicative act. Outcomes depend on circumstances that participants may not control and that may not be equally known to everyone involved. Discursive interaction is metacommunicatively organized: how participants take each other's message—what they believe, take seriously, ignore, take as a joke, and so on is framed by culturally learned signals that, again, not everyone equally knows or controls. Finally, discourse functions can bring into being certain states of belief or social connectedness, which is to say, discourse routinely has performative outcomes (i.e., effects on prior social states).

Discourse analysis links this complex of interactional elements, most of which people do not consciously monitor, to the specific things that people say, write, or otherwise communicate. It thus provides a highly textured set of social diagnostics. Moreover, since the social positions that people take on have cultural meanings, such analysis provides a nuanced look at the ways in which social actors depend on and exemplify cultural perspectives. In this way, the methods of discourse analysis can provide ethnographic insight into the inculcation, during college life, of habitual uses of *skills* and *diversity* that are coherent with the frame of thinking that students encounter in their working world. To put it another way, the neoliberal imaginary is embedded in a habitus that develops in the lives of young people well before they hit the job market.

Undergraduate Education as a Skill Set

My ethnographic locus is an elite private liberal arts college (referred to here as the College), but what I examine here is routine in undergraduate experience. *Skills* are predominantly institutionalized through programs and centers for writing, quantitative literacy and oral communication, in material describing the content of academic programs, and through the career center. *Diversity*, as

I discuss in the next section, is predominantly institutionalized through the admissions process (including identity choice in college applications), through program structures, course selection and coursework, and through the structures of participation in student and residential life, particularly cultural organizations. Both usages also occur in discourses developed by college publicity and fund-raising offices, and displayed on college Web sites and official school publications.

Before taking up specific examples of discursive construction, I reiterate and emphasize that what students acquire are less specific skills or forms of knowledge than generalized discursive habits, ways of using those terms that, in certain fields, do carry value in the sense laid out by Bourdieu (1991). As noted above, uses of *skills* and *diversity* are not referentially consistent. They are used in different situations in ways that seem to denote different qualities or things. Denotative consistency, however, is not what matters here: the variant usages of *skills* or *diversity* are examples of *strategically deployable shifters*—referring expressions used across different fields of discourse in ways that are formally the same but with different social implications (Urciuoli 2003). The term *shifter* derives from grammatical analysis (see M. Silverstein 1976): grammatical shifters such as *this/that* or *here/there* have no fixed referent but rather align the speaker with other elements of context.² The lack of fixed referent is obvious in the use of a shifter like *this* or *here* or *we*. But nouns, verbs, and adjectives can be used in comparable ways: in what seem at first glance to be ordinary acts of reference involving terms with simple, obvious denotation, people establish or reiterate value-laden social alignments. Such shifter-like usage is routine in political or religious discourse. It is also common but less obvious in corporate discourse in which, for example, people routinely refer to *communication* in ways that identify themselves with the interests of the organization or with a management perspective. One consequence of the neoliberalization of higher education is the increasing use of such strategically deployable shifters, resonant with corporate values, in higher education administrative and residential life discourses—a saturation that most users absorb without deliberate or conscious intent.

A prime example is the routinized use of *skills* in college and university self-description. Until recently, with changes in graduation requirements for the class of 2005, the College listed among its graduation requirements the following language:

Fundamental Skills: The College expects its students to attain a satisfactory level of achievement in written, oral and quantitative work.

1. *Writing skills.* Students are encouraged to take writing-intensive courses. The Writing Program requires that every student pass at least three such courses, each taken in a different semester. . . . This requirement should be completed by the end of the junior year.

2. *Oral skills.* A high proportion of courses at [the College] help students develop their skills in oral communication, through class discussion and/or formal presentations.
3. *Quantitative skills.* Students must demonstrate basic quantitative literacy by passing a quantitative skills examination given during Orientation, or by passing a designated quantitative course, or by completing a non-credit tutorial. . . . This requirement should be completed by the end of the first year.³

In the College's current graduation requirement language, the word *skills* is only used in the description of the quantitative literacy requirement. However, in its current strategic plan, the College does refer to its "emphasis on persuasive speaking and writing, skills that at one time were the purview of specific departments, but which now are embedded in courses throughout the curriculum."⁴ Several academic departments refer on their Web sites to their inculcation of *writing skills*, *communication skills*, *quantitative skills*, *critical thinking skills*, *research skills*, *language skills*, and *analytic skills*. *Skills*, in short has come to be used interchangeably with *capacity*, *knowledge*, *expertise* and so forth, a usage that students have internalized as much as faculty and administrators. There is a good deal of variation in the specifics of what can count as *skills* in this sense, and as the following study suggests, students do not see everything referred to as *skills* in the same light. A survey of graduating college seniors (Sweet 2004) asked how their undergraduate experience had enhanced their capacity to write effectively, communicate well orally, and use quantitative tools. Students had a clear sense of what writing effectively entailed, a less clear sense of what oral communication entailed, and little clear sense of what quantitative capacities entailed, in fact disagreeing across disciplines on what counts as quantitative. Students also had quite a different sense of how each of these capacities was learned or who could learn them (anyone could learn to write with practice; some are just naturally better at oral communication though most could learn it; and as for quantitative, either one knows it or one does not). Nevertheless, students routinely do refer to all three of these as *skills*.

Two points should be made about the use of *skill* in a liberal arts curriculum. First, as generally used, it implies generalization across situations (*skills* are learned and transferable) rather than particular knowledge. This fits the notion of a flexible workforce in which people ideally use their palette of transferable skills in participation on different teams to solve a range of problems. Second, there is at the same time a sense that these particular skills can only have been obtained in a liberal arts education. *Critical thinking*, *research*, and *language skills* are learned in literature or philosophy or history or science or language courses. Similarly, the continual affiliation of *writing* and *speaking skills*, and the referential interchangeability of *oral communication*, *persuasive speaking*, and *speaking clearly*, or *writing skills*, *effective writing*, and *writing powerfully* suggests a quality of cultured leadership that could only originate at an elite school. In

this way, liberal arts education does not simply become an expensive form of vocational training but rather selected elements of liberal arts education mark a continuity between college life and corporate life.

A different referential palette emerges in the language used by the College's career center, whose task is to "assist students in developing skills in self-assessment, career exploration, résumé preparation, interviewing, and uncovering job leads that will empower them to proactively manage their own careers."⁵ The career center offers workshops every few weeks to seniors on job hunting and interviewing. In these workshops, *skills* is used in ways more directly congruent with usages found in the working world. A "Know Thy Skills!" handout distributed at a November 2003 workshop on interviewing skills explains a distinction between skills and abilities (skills are acquired), and between functional skills (transferable task-accomplishment skills) and adaptive skills ("personality traits" facilitating interaction with co-workers and one's work environment). Students are shown how to identify, inventory, and evaluate the nature and degree of their skills as identified by skills lists supplied on cards and worksheets used by the workshop presenters. This information then becomes the basis for constructing job applications. This skills assessment procedure can be sampled at the Web site of Stewart, Cooper and Coon Executive Placement and Training, the company providing the assessment sheets for the workshop (Stewart, Cooper and Coon n.d.).⁶ The transition from the college's *skills* discourse to discourse in the placement workshop illustrates another operation of *skills* as a strategically deployable shifter, formally identical but semantically variant. What the college calls *skills* are congruent with and generalized from the contents of a liberal arts curriculum. The skills identified in the workshop worksheets are specific aspects of tasks, including (I quote from the Web site sample): "observe," "maintain records," "read for information," "write," "prepare food," "interview for information," "teach/train," "plant/cultivate," "plan/organize," "count," "transport," "budget," "use physical coordination and agility," "compose music," "design," "use carpentry abilities," "sell," "monitor," "mediate," "counsel," and so on. This "skills matrix," as its authors call it, is made up of both things one does (functional skills) and things one is (adaptive skills), thus providing a template for reconceptualizing oneself not just as a worker, but as an inventory of parts of tasks. In this way it is like many other readily available career-counseling products. And however different this skills matrix is denotatively from the college's *skills* language, they are congruent in that both represent ways of imagining the self.

Diversity: From Social Justice to Social Skill

Diversity is predominantly institutionalized through the recruitment and admissions process (including inscriptions of identity choice in college applications), through program structures, course selection and coursework, and

through the structures of participation in residential and student life, particularly the cultural organizations. The cumulative effect of much of this institutional production (and despite the efforts of some, not all, course curricula to resist it) is the discursive restructuring of *diversity* as a thing that people have. The same process is taking place throughout U.S. colleges and universities, and as is the case with *skills* discourses, *diversity* has come to be used in ways congruent with though not identical to diversity discourses in the corporate world. What people identify and reify as a culture is cumulatively produced by institutionalized processes and discourses (Handler 1988) and particular aspects of that production may well reflect corporate processes and interests (Handler and Gable 1997). In comparable fashion, *diversity* has no a priori existence apart from the institutional processes from which it emerges, and when those institutional processes are subsumed, wholly or partially, into contemporary corporate actions and policies, what emerges is a strikingly neoliberalized version of diversity.

Diversity operates as a strategically deployable shifter insofar as it is used in ways that align its users with a particular perspective; here, a marketized one. This is evident in the institutionalization of diversity in the recruitment and admissions process, which begins with a school's self-representation to prospective students. An example can be seen in the explanation that *U.S. News and World Report: America's Best Colleges 2009* gives of diversity as a desirable selling point in college recruitment, and of their "diversity index":

Collegebound students who believe that studying with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds is important will want to consider student body diversity when choosing a school. To identify colleges where students are most likely to encounter undergraduates from racial or ethnic groups different from their own, *U.S. News* factors in the total proportion of minority students—leaving out international students—and the overall mix of groups. The enrollment data are drawn from each institution's 2007–2008 student body as reported to *U.S. News*. The categories we use in our calculations are American Indians and Native Alaskans, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, African-Americans who are non-Hispanic, whites who are non-Hispanic, and Hispanics. Students who did not identify themselves as members of any demographic group were classified as whites who are non-Hispanic for the purpose of this calculation. Our formula produces a diversity index that ranges from 0 to 1. The closer a school's number is to 1, the more diverse is the student population.

This methodology was created by Philip Meyer and Shawn McIntosh and published in 1992 in the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. (U.S. News and World Report n.d.)

This is the same five-part taxonomy brought into existence by affirmative action legislation during the Nixon administration and common in the 1980s and 1990s. The now widely used common application form⁷ expands the Asian and Hispanic possibilities but the taxonomy itself is not substantially changed. This taxonomy provides the basis for the college model of cultural diversity and is heavily reflected in program structures (Latino Studies, Asian

Studies, Africana Studies) and student cultural organizations. This use of *diversity* presupposes that the important diverse unit is not the group but the individual. Diversity can, like culture, be possessed as a thing. As *U.S. News and World Report* suggests, students who have it provide a service to the institution; a diverse institution has a competitive edge, attracting better students. This is an article of belief among admissions personnel. When I was on our college admissions committee, I frequently heard references to a potential student “bringing diversity” to the school.

While diverse students provide this service to the school simply by being there, what they ideally provide is a visible engagement with the school at large. This falls under the general heading “educating the public,” a service performed through participation in the school’s cultural organizations. When students identify themselves as Latino, black, or Asian on the application form, they find themselves entering a series of institutional pathways. Checking off a box is the beginning of an ongoing process of identity construction. The next step is joining an organization. The wording that describes the black, Latino, and Asian clubs highlights cultural promotion and inclusiveness. The Asian club “is committed to increasing the consciousness of and enhancing the appreciation for all Asian cultures. [It] promotes diversity and emphasizes cultural enrichment . . . [and] is open to all members of the [college] community.” The black student club “is open to all people, of all ethnic, racial, and political backgrounds”; its members “discuss and explore Black History as well as its effects in modern history.” The Latino club provides “a positive image of Latino culture in the community” and “broadens the community’s awareness of issues pertaining to Latino culture, society and politics.” The black and Latino organizations also emphasize their provision of a safe social environment.⁸

The engagement of organization members in the job of cultural production is illustrated by this 2004 interview with a graduating senior, an officer in the Latino student society: “I delegated jobs or tasks to the rest of the e-board, depending on what event we were doing for the week or for the month. I would also put agendas together for meetings, both e-board and general membership meetings. I sent out e-mails. I communicated with different faculty and administration about different events that were going on with the organization. There were times when I also contacted outside people that we wanted to book for whatever events we were doing. I sent e-mails out—as secretary I sent e-mails out with the minutes. I took minutes. I handled the budget. I dealt with . . . the Dean of Students office about our budget, handing in receipts and making check requests on time.” The programming covered theatrical and musical performances, literary productions, and speakers on historical and social topics. Who got invited depended in part on who did the programming work: this particular student favored “mainly political speakers, and my interest was also for women to come up here because I wanted the women that we

did have in the organization to have some kind of stronger leadership, because the leadership of Latina women and Latina professors that we have on campus is limited.” As this suggests, cultural production can and often does take on a political inflection. There are resources to bring a range of speakers, as the next interview with a graduating (2002) member of the black student organization executive board shows. The interviewee also makes clear that the task of cultural production may bring one into contact with institutional structures of diversity and with the apathy of the racially unmarked:

After being community service chair, I ran for vice president and I won, so I became vice president. . . . And my role became much more of a leadership role in that I had to serve not only as a role model almost but you had to be very proactive in that whatever you did in terms of—I would argue that [the College] is very limiting in terms of issues of diversity, in that there’s a framework you work within as opposed to—you can’t offer ideas that are “out of the box” (quote, unquote). So I always had to remain optimistic at all times, in terms of [the College’s] claims relating to diversity. However every year we admit the same amount of students of color. . . . You just question whatever motives—is it just in rhetoric? Or is [the College] really—does it intend to do this in practice? As VP, I also administered the budget. In that instance [the College] is very generous, they gave [us] a couple of thousand dollars to do what you want with. The sense I got from that was one of—we’re satisfying our diversity component so it doesn’t hurt us to lose this amount of money to pretty much placate or appease the people of color at [the College] so that we don’t look to complain about diversity because of the fact that they’re giving us a sum of money to do what we want with for diversity programming. The VP was an intense role, but I felt sorry for the president who’s a close friend of mine.

This student makes clear that officership is tasked with cultural production in a way that maintains a status quo of racial markedness. He goes on to make even clearer the mechanisms: “I would say, as much as I would like to go against it, the charge of [the black student organization] is to provide the diversity programming for [the College]. Despite what the students want to do, we still have to get our budget approved so we can get our programming approved, and if we don’t fit into the mold of, well, how is this going to affect the campus as opposed to an insular event, we can’t really do it unless—well, what’s [the College] campus benefitting from, in you doing this event? So I know that the charge of the organization is to pretty much—it’s institution driven, it’s driven by the administration.” What we see here is the production of diversity as a job, diversity programming, and the role of the cultural organization officer as the task manager. Part of that job is an internalization of diversity discourse as a discourse of task management. This young man’s participation in this discourse may not represent an uncritical alignment of his interests with the College’s but he does exhibit a sort of resigned acceptance, a sense of “that’s how it is,” which is a pretty good example of how discursive hegemony operates.

This discourse of programming and task management is even more evident

in the work of the resident advisers (RAs). Unlike the above-interviewed officers who volunteer to do organizational work, RAs are hired to do programming. The RA training manual outlines the *community building* as part of the RA's job in its introduction, "Getting ready for the RA position: Preparing the foundation for community building": "So you are going to be a resident assistant. Welcome to a community of learners who are as diverse as the global community, who possess a myriad of individual skills and talents and who use their differences to come together in a commitment to make residence living a positive learning experience." Note here that individual members of the "community of learners" are *diverse* in ways that play an instrumental role in community building. Here we see diversity as a strategically deployable shifter slide into hazy denotative territory while reinforcing its sense of alignment with a management ethos. *Diversity* may denote race and ethnicity but that is not clear. What is clear is that it is paralleled with "skills and talents," that it is equated with some form of difference that can be used, that is productive for the organization. The RA role is identified with what contemporary workplace literature refers to as the team, and like a good team member the RA is flexible. The RA is portrayed as an agent of change, both a sort of apprentice social engineer and part of the social technology, someone capable of using a skill set to bring about results: a cause-and-effect model. Residential life discourse is saturated with references to e.g., "time management," "programming," "handling confrontation," and "conflict resolution," all conceptualized as *skills*, techniques that can be learned and which, if done correctly, should provide consistent outcomes. Here for example is a suggestion for a program to provide diversity education to make dorm residents better people: "When an RA is able to present diversity education in small ways consistently on the floor, an environment that is open to diversity is established where not only differences are acknowledged but also similarities are recognized."⁹ By far the strongest identification of *diversity* with organizational management and cultural reengineering is provided by the language on the Posse Foundation Web site:

The concept of a Posse works for both students and college campuses, and is rooted in the belief that a small, diverse group of talented students—a Posse—carefully selected and trained, can serve as a catalyst for increased individual and community development. Identified for their leadership ability and overall motivation to succeed, Posse Scholars head campus organizations, encourage dialogue and programs that foster an inclusive campus environment and achieve academic success. (Posse Foundation n.d.)

The Posse Foundation provides cohorts of diverse students, admitted as a group of ten, to subscribing colleges. This provides a boost for the school's demographic profile (valuable for *U.S. News and World Report* rankings), and promises the services of the Posse cohort as an agent of change, since the

incoming group has had team training, much like that provided to corporate employees. The foundation is heavily subsidized by corporations who ideally hire Posse graduates. Posse embeds references to diversity and multiculturalism in the language of leadership, problem solving, and community development in ways that foreground a notion of an internalized social technology, connecting ideas about higher education and life in the corporate world much more directly than the other diversity discourses we've looked at. They may not come right out and say *skills*, but they are operating in the same discursive universe.

What Comes out of All This Discourse?

These discourses project a particular vision of how students are supposed to be in the world: individuals whose worth is defined by their possession and control of productive work skills, and who ideally become part of the corporate social technology by internalizing its task structure through the template provided by an inventory of *skills*.¹⁰ This template is congruent with the notion that the individual's worth can be assessed in terms of productivity, with productivity a measurable outcome of skills. *Diversity* works in this setup insofar as it functions as either an interpersonal skill or a specialized way of dealing with a task. Either way, it is something the *diverse employee* brings to the organization as part of the social technology. This fitting of the semiotics of *diversity* into those of *skill* reflects a process that Michael Silverstein (2003) calls "indexical ordering": new terms come to be used in ways that fit a previously enregistered order of meaning in that particular discourse. Diversity, defined as bits of cultural difference possessed by an individual, is valued not in its own right but as something potentially productive. In this corporatized education discourse, *skills* and *diversity* emerge as defining social facts through a process described by Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban (1996: 2) as a "metadiscursive construct . . . that grows out of and refers to actual cultural practices" through entextualization, through their embeddedness in institutionally produced texts, passed on as something apparently understood and shared.

While it is difficult to point to specific instances in which skills discourses lead students to imagine themselves in certain ways, such discourses do set up conceptualizations of subjectivity that reinforce the naturalness, the inevitability of students imagining themselves as skill sets, diversity as a skill, and productivity as a natural end. In his study of student life in twelve elite colleges and universities, Barrett Seaman reports how struck he was to find students thinking of themselves "as products, not people" (2005: 99). Seaman's book, based on extensive discussions with students and with student and residential life professionals, offers quite a bit of supporting evidence of such shifts in student perceptions of themselves. In my own discussions with students about Seaman's book and about my own research, they affirm that it is not unusual

for them to think of themselves as “bundles of skills.” So perhaps the social and market conditions producing the discourses described above really have played a role in college students’ internalizing of the neoliberal imaginary.

Many academics criticize the corporatization of academic life and the imposition of an entrepreneurial culture on higher education while slipping easily into skills discourses or readily participating in institutional diversity marketing. Such contradictions illustrate the hegemony of the neoliberal imaginary—people might not like how things are but they see no other way, nor do they question its terms. The particular value of ethnographically embedded discourse analysis is its capacity to demonstrate specific ways in which neoliberalism has settled into place and established itself as the way things are, saturating contemporary academic beliefs and practices.

Chapter 11

Harlem's Pasts in Its Present

SANDHYA SHUKLA

The presentism of political-economic ideologies like neoliberalism has always frustrated scholars who seek to understand culture. Even anthropologists who are singularly oriented toward the everyday of ethnography confront the power of historical myth and memory in the lives of individuals and communities. To suggest that new forms of organization wipe the slate clean of long-standing investments is at least as untenable as the proposition that such newness is, necessarily, widely desired or freely chosen. The subject of the city brings such complexities to the fore. The nitty-gritty of urban existence (survival, economic activity, pressing political problems) often inspires a deeply empirical approach to questions of dwelling. But the city-space is one in which people continually negotiate their relationships to the past, present, and future; and these processes imbue a place with richly symbolic potential. For scholars and critics, then, the methodological imperative of the city is more than observation. Providing all sorts of text and narrative, the city asks us to develop creative reading practices that can process a range of often contradictory world-views. The city caught in the forces of neoliberalism, actively, and perhaps defensively, constructing a layered temporality, presents a particularly vivid situation in which to read contradiction.

In the critical literature on urban space the city that offers such interpretive possibility, about big questions like history and the future, is often conceived along the lines of a modernist or, even, postmodernist space writ similarly large: Berlin, London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles. Reading the city is to read modern life and modern nation-states (Berman 1982; Benjamin 2002). The impulse toward a grand narrative—what bigger story than modernity?—is aided and abetted by exploring places that figure prominently in the popular imagination. Embedded in that tendency to see New York City or Paris as capturing broad swaths of social experience is another, I would suggest: one that sees specifically racialized space (“minority” space, as Michel Laguerre [1999] identifies it) as peripheral. Critics and observers seldom see those minority spaces as containing metaphorical potential, or, if they do, the opera-

tions are of a more literal correspondence between race and place. And I would insist that a deeper historical sensibility—which at many moments is most meaningful for the life of a city—is flattened out by the lens constructed for ghettos, ethnic neighborhoods, and the like.

But what happens when we put the complicated worlds of these other(ed) places at the center of our inquiry, to illuminate broader social transformations that constitute *historical change*? This essay begins to answer that question by taking Harlem, a site relegated to the periphery of the larger urban center of New York, and moving it to the center of our imagination, to ponder the local effects of broader cultural and social forces, and the role of historical understanding in the construction of contemporary experiences of place. Harlem, I suggest here, offers us an especially fertile field in which to ponder how history makes the modern, the urban, and the future.

Understanding Harlem in this way is a project about space and time. Henri Lefebvre, in his magnum opus on conceptualizing social space, has persuasively argued for *historical* perspective, observing that all spaces have a history, always and already. He writes about his concern as the “long *history of space*,” and that “space implies time, and vice versa” (Lefebvre 1991: 116, 118). As important as this insight for Harlem is Lefebvre’s point about space being lived and produced through its symbolics. What Harlem is understood to be in the world outside and inside (in the field of representation) influences what we might think of as experience, or lived space. The sense of Harlem being on the edge of profound transformation, even extinction, haunts historical representation at every turn (Attie 2003). In this projection, Harlem is both a place of ruins and also a space of excess. Not only can Harlem’s present not be easily extricated from its pasts, its potential must, of necessity, be read through the echoes of multiple histories. As myth and symbol of so much (the African American experience, the Boricua homeland, the enclave of early Italian Catholics, and more), Harlem defies singularized narrative impulse, giving rise to fractured, overlapping, and, especially, incommensurate texts. And this offers tremendous possibility, I shall suggest here as a way to explain the intermingling of time and space categories and as a way to think about community subjectivity and difference and their fictions. We can locate interpretive power in how stories of the past create a discursive map for confronting the present (often through the vocabulary of racialized ethnicity) and yet may also operate at a disconnect from contemporary realities.

Harlem’s represented present is thoroughly shaped by neoliberal urban visions of neighborhood transformation and progress, mass-consumer economies, diverse populations, middle-class formation. That unrelenting focus on the future is of course prescriptive rather than analytical. Its teleology of coherence and efficiency relies on conceptions of the past as full of unmanageable chaos. As this is applied to the modern metropolis, future dreams of greater global community rest on constructed pasts of dislocated peoples and

incompetent economies. The past in neoliberal narratives of what is possible in the city is either residual or nostalgic (and therefore irrational). Neoliberalism provides both the logic and alibi for the form of "urban renewal" that is gentrification. Presuming that resistance to displacement and the transformation of meanings for a place operate in the realm of an uncritical nostalgia, developers propose a vision of a more rational and more participatory future in the form of new buildings, racial and social integration, diverse income backgrounds for community residents—a *new*, internationally recognizable place. Within Harlem questions of how to understand the past become hopelessly entangled in the overwhelming pressures of neoliberal arguments (and structural forces) in the service of gentrification. Futurist narratives rely on the necessity of rupture, or a dramatic departure from the past. But, more pointedly, and as I shall argue below, there are indeed alternative conceptions of history, meaning, and place that not only give a different kind of life to Harlem, but also, perhaps, help to develop other forms of resistance to the story of a necessary extinction. They challenge, I hope, the facile rendering of identitarian investments in place but also fill out our understanding of racial formation. And these conceptions and processings of history in a place that has been seen to be so *particular* have a purchase on broader understandings of the self and community and on a relationship to modernity.

This, then, is necessarily a story of reading and writing in a different historical register, with attention to formative moments that might be otherwise overlooked. Confronting neoliberal economies and political formations are stories that are not easily assimilated into a coherent future; not only are they not necessarily compatible with dominant visions of "renewal," they are not even translatable to one another. The *space* of East Harlem, over the years a destination for Italian, Puerto Rican, and now Mexican and Central American immigrants, captures divergent national, ethnic, and racial histories and becomes, for our purposes, a complex narrative *field*. A periodic lack of translatability among those histories results in a productive chaos, precisely in its ability to compel an alternative reading strategy.

I suggest here, in practice, that gazing comparatively and globally across different transactions of space and time gets us closer to the sensibility of what it means to inhabit Harlem, to understand the tension between dwelling and mobility that has built the place. Harlem's meaning is to be found in varied representational sites and in and through many different groups of people—Italians, Jews, Africans, African Americans, West Indians, Mexicans, and others—all in some way, at some point, racialized. The process of racialization, of course, changes over time and is given different meaning with regard to various experiences of migration, in and out of Harlem, from another country into the United States and otherwise. Shifting frameworks for these peoples structurally mirror changes in the meanings for place and highlight the importance of comparison as a literary and historical technique of representation.

Here, then, we might stress interpretation rather than recovery. The discipline of history, even in many important and illuminating scholarly projects, is often taken very literally, to mean on the one hand change over time and on the other experiences *in* the past. The process of change and the vocabularies in which transformation is lived often remain underexplained. The social sciences in their own emphasis on observability, I believe, also erect limits to our knowledge practices of urban life. Here is where a more open ethnographic imagination, alive to experience that continually crosses phases of the past, present, and future, and spatial boundaries built by neighborhood blocks, and attentive to the need to read carefully and deeply, might help. And casting the story of comparative racial formation, especially as one that processes historical traces (not merely residue), gives us a sense of presence, to counteract the message that this is an empty space just waiting to be filled in with people, with things, and with meaning. Neighborhood succession, then, is not natural or inevitable, but vexed by competing claims to territory, space, and representation. We move through various iterations of place and history in part to understand time and space differently, with admittedly political ends in mind. It is to attend to Michel de Certeau's insight: "The renovated 'old stories' become places for translation between the ghosts of the past and the imperatives of the present" (de Certeau, quoted in Boym 2001: 76). Thus we are interested here less in memory, of community or identification, than in projections in the past of the future.¹

Losses of Italian Harlem

Italian Harlem is experienced by many in the city, certainly by those in Harlem especially, as a relic—not only a symptom of what the place once was but also a futile attempt to develop a territorial foothold in the face of inevitable and inexorable change. It is but a fleeting contemporary material reality, as probably less than a hundred Italians still reside in the area. But in terms of symbolic circulation—what meanings have been invested and continue to emerge through the category—Italian Harlem functions as a kind of spectral presence. The religious procession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel through the main arteries of East Harlem embodies that complex intermingling of past and present and opens up ways to think about key concepts vis-à-vis the tremendously compelling experience of place.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel's scholarly ground is well-trod. At the center of Robert Orsi's masterful *The Madonna of 115th Street* (1985), a classic ethnographic-historical work on immigration and ethnicity, popular religion and community formation, this statue and the yearly marches to celebrate her presence in East Harlem have become paradigmatic for many a student of ethnic history and/or religious community. Orsi captured a wonderful, and important, moment when the Madonna as material object and as symbol,

held together the hopes and dreams and difficulties of Italians in the United States. The statue of the Madonna, transported from Italy and planted in a small church on 115th Street in Harlem, in the middle of a large Italian immigrant community, became in the late 1800s, and continuing well into the middle 1900s, a vehicle for negotiating, in the parlance of older models of immigration, the move from the "old" world to the "new," yet always, in the language of more contemporary scholarship, navigated transnational flows, back and forth, and back again. It was an exotic object of otherness materialized, alienation lived, and transcendence imagined. And when the statue was paraded through the streets, it was, as Orsi so powerfully evoked, an occasion for the practice of popular religion.

Of course the Italian community in Harlem dwindled, due to all the predictable factors: middle-class ascent and the influx of new immigrants (especially those from Puerto Rico, beginning in the 1940s)—those developments neatly encapsulated by the phrase "white flight." This form of ethnicity, at first racially subjectified and then "whitened," and its place in East Harlem fit comfortably within stories of many U.S. urban locales that were originally peopled by immigrants from southern and Eastern Europe and, eventually, the destination points for African American migrants from other parts of the United States, and then Latin American immigrants. Easily transportable, from New York, to Chicago, to Los Angeles, to other cities, this story that has become titled as "neighborhood succession" takes complex, and particularized, negotiations over the experience and representation of the past, those that hardly respect temporal or spatial boundaries, and casts them into a trajectory, moving toward the present. The simplified tale of neighborhood successions finds a structural analogue in evolution, particularly in its intimation of change as "organic" (see Frazier 1937).

But we might dwell in another time-space. The church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and its yearly procession remain. Responses to it vary wildly, from an acute knowledge of its history as a spectacle, to relative ignorance about what it is, to outright derision. The *Time Out New York* guide nonetheless lists it under the category of street events and, presumably, directs diverse New York City tourists to this local ethnic-religious parade and festival. In the summer of 2005, the event took shape in ways deeply connected to the past, but with an air of irrelevance and nostalgia. The priest and administrators of the famous church on 115th Street that houses the Madonna still look to the parade as the crowning event of its yearly schedule. Part of this, to be sure, is about the centrality of the Madonna to the church's sense of itself; that is to say, that there is a genuine feeling about the idol and the religious practices around it. But that sensibility has always been inextricable from the place of Italians in Harlem. The point I want to make here is that this *historical* feature of the cultural practice is not unrelated to Harlem's future; indeed, it is essential to understanding how place is made through investments in presence.

If the festa was once about popular religion “on the streets,” it is now, perhaps much more, about the performance of nostalgia. It is important, however, that we understand nostalgia as about a good deal more than simply a sanitized memory of the past. It would be quite easy to see Italian American enunciations in East Harlem as a highly romanticized look back to the heyday of large populations and vibrant cultures in the area. And that is surely a significant aspect of the experience. But it is not all. Nor is the performance of the past that is the enduring festival reducible to something that once was and no longer is.

Many writers have explored nostalgia as a form of re-creation, reproduction, and compensation, and about imagining futures (Boym 2001; Huyssen 2003). For Italians (and for others in the area, I would venture), marching the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel up and down First Avenue, a central artery of East Harlem, which is now Puerto Rican, Mexican, African American, Dominican, and, perhaps, everything else, is a way to say that history matters in the uncertain and rapidly transforming landscape of the place. It is not really to suggest that Italians must have a foothold in the development plans for gentrification. In fact, Puerto Rican communities have much more influence in such work, and the ground, as it were, is already ceded to these interests in a mild echo of the deeply felt sense among Italians that they were displaced by Puerto Rican migrants in the 1940s. Instead, I believe that part of the experience of the very existence of this yearly ritual is about a different sort of claim to territory, to the narrative production of the place. It is a response to what might be seen as a modern condition, of communities changing, the growing distance between generations, and the commodification of culture.

The dominant stories told about Harlem—east, central, and west—frequently paper over the depth of loss associated with movement, especially historical movements. And as such, they dwell not in the process associated with the construction of urban meaning, in which many sorts of encounters, exchanges, and conflicts present themselves, but instead fixate on the production of singular forms of identification: Spanish East Harlem, black Harlem, African Harlem, and the like. Yet meaning for social space and the experience of place, all evidenced in how relationships to territory are cast (in conversation, in the artifacts of the imaginary), foreground the loss from and anxiety about change. African Americans recall the glorious past of Harlem and its cultural riches (of the Harlem Renaissance, of any other period) with a poignancy that bespeaks the inevitability of extinction. Italian Americans and Puerto Ricans index their respective demises to others moving in and the changing political economy of East Harlem. Even Mexicans and Africans, much more recent arrivals to, respectively, East Harlem and West Harlem, produce their claims to spatial territory as imperiled by city government forces, especially those that support gentrification. That loss is a central feature of what it means to live in Harlem, in the United States, indeed, in the world, seems obvious and less

interesting than the question of how loss is addressed and in what vocabularies loss gets its fullest airing and processing. I would suggest, first of all, that the insistence of presence of some kind in places that threaten to be erased of the past is a special strategy to challenge neoliberalist (and futurist) conceptions of progress.

What is at stake, then, in having been there? Building on and redirecting slightly the conceptualization of nostalgia, Joseph Roach has offered a powerful way to describe the psychic and cultural work that the past does in the present for those caught in many forces of change. He describes a process of surrogation, of culture's reproduction, in which memory, performance, and substitution become the means by which subjects of a constructed community employ selective memory. Roach writes: "Into the cavities created by loss through death or other forms of departure, survivors attempt to fit satisfactory alternates . . . but the intended substitute either cannot fulfill expectations, creating a deficit, or actually exceeds them, creating a surplus" (Roach 1996: 2). What this approach to present-nostalgic processes suggests is a nonliteral object and the displacement from a more traumatic scene to something safer, possible, and in a very complex way, palliative. The deficit lies in the inability to properly assuage the loss, and the surplus is a kind of excess beyond that which addresses the intention of a performance. Thinking about the work of cultural performance as a kind of *surrogation*, rather than *expression* (of needs, desires, or, for that matter, identities) compels us to critically read the moment, or the text, in deeper ways, through multiple historical narratives and contexts and through experiences that might not always appear to be connected. This is, then, about more than intertextuality; it is about an interpretive process that takes history seriously and as a site of differences coming together.

In the construction of a performed relationship to place, *history*, *experience*, and *text* intermingle somewhat unpredictably. The festival of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is itself a performance of, and performs, the contradictions of the moment, in directly contending with the fact of territory no longer being able to moor community transformation. Of course instead of articulating that fact, the festa is a march through those very streets that cannot contain the full impact of change: it is a displacement that produces both deficit and surplus. The narrative of Italian Americans' departure from Harlem always employs, as climax, the entrance of Puerto Ricans, of another, less racially advantaged minority group displacing another. A kind of discursive racism is rarely absent from the telling. One Italian American priest notes that "they had to get Italians out, so they brought in the Puerto Ricans from Puerto Rico, it was political." The assertion of force attending Italians' departure can be found in the common articulation that "Italians were pushed out of Harlem."² This account incorporates neither the upward mobility that was accessible to "white ethnics" nor the complexities of middle-class formation in East Harlem in the 1940s. Even more important, the emphasis on coerced

departure elides the conflicts, intimacies, and solidarities that might have taken shape on the boundaries of community formation.³

A rather different, and somewhat startling, form of diversity is on display in the contemporary version of the festa. In the 2005 event, a very small local population and a larger Italian American contingent from the tristate area were joined by an even larger group of Haitian men and women (though mostly women) from Brooklyn and upstate New York. The statue and the march represented contrasting and by no means compatible claims for different participants and onlookers. When asked about Haitians attending the event that for so long had been the purview of Italian American–Catholic ethnicity, participants nonchalantly reminded me about the multiple claimings of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, that in Haiti she is an important patroness. Even the longtime priest of the East Harlem church, whose major investments lie in Italian ownership over the area and over the cultural-religious rituals defining the space, speaks with a surprising reverence about the five thousand or more Haitians who come to celebrate the feast.

Bridging the significant divide, here, of race and class is *devotion*. Interestingly, devotion in this case can trump tradition in the hierarchy of claims to ownership, or at least participation, of a public ritual. In a sense, devotion, too, offers a different sense of time and place to the performance; the parade can be both more and less than a relic of the past (of a no longer existing “Italian Harlem”), it can be a quite comprehensible form of relating to beliefs from elsewhere. Indeed, as Elizabeth MacAlister (1998) has so wonderfully shown, the participation of Haitians in the festival and the Vodou with which they infuse modern Catholicism resituate the festival in a transnational world of flows and influences. But for both Italians and Haitians whose connection to the festival is articulated through the vocabulary of religious devotion, there may be a challenge to a whole range of dominant discourses of community and belonging, to the neoliberal use value of the place itself, which might prescribe particular forms of development, and to those deeply dependent on the “naturalness” of push-pull factors for communities changing.

In both the candlelight procession on the night preceding the feast day and the morning of the 2005 parade, the front phalanx was all Italian, mostly middle-aged men and women. And those just slightly to the rear of the first row, holding the statue, were also Italian. Much of the processional crowd following, however, was Haitian, and the dominant sound heard as the procession went by was of devotional songs, from mostly Haitian women. Orsi wrote of the earlier incarnation of the festival: “Although she was an immigrant, the Madonna was truly of 115th Street” (Orsi 1985: xix). What does it mean, now, to be *of* 115th Street? At the very least, it suggests an ability to catalyze and hold up multiple experiences of place, identity, affect, and time—all in the midst of a certain specter of loss, of the area on the verge of extinction. When the candlelight procession stopped in front of St. Ann’s Church on 110th

Street, whose bells were loudly ringing, it seemed that only the Haitians ran in for offerings and prayer. Outside, the Italians patiently waited; a conversation I overheard recounted how the speaker's friend attended a funeral there recently and was robbed.

We must confront the possibility, too, that experiences of place, community, and time, even when they are *in* the same place, and, perhaps, also taking shape through similar idioms (of departure or loss), are not always mutually legible. There is the possibility always that some conjunctures produce the impossibility of translation. As the procession moved through the streets, it passed by a variety of onlookers. One African American adolescent pointed at the (admittedly unusual in appearance) Virgin and said: "what the fuck is that?" The Puerto Rican residents, many from the large housing projects in the area, were mostly at food stands and also standing on sidewalks, looking on bemusedly, almost as if consciously resisting (or being excluded from) the walk through a neighborhood they laid other sorts of claims to. During the main day's festivities and parade, a nearby soccer field was as busy as ever, with many Mexican residents seemingly unconcerned about Our Lady's movements. Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and Mexican residents of the area are all in danger of significant displacement, yet they often appear to find little in common either with one another around this issue or with an earlier experience of departure.

Yet many communities, perhaps all social groups, address *departure* through its double: *presence*. And the ephemerality of being there or having been there is perhaps best highlighted in attempts to concretize in museums and museum exhibits.⁴ Processes of commodification inherent in the "museumizing" of ethnic community and culture find complementarity with multicultural frameworks in which belonging is constituted through the fact of having a past. Yet of course articulations of ethnic presence, filtered as they are through the context crowded by all sorts of encounters, operate in less than obvious fashion. And the concrete is illusory, so that the absences present themselves almost as powerfully as what *appears*. Even as I contemplated the odd coalescence of interests in the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I was handed an announcement for the opening of the National Museum of Catholic Art and History in a building just adjacent to the church.

The National Museum of Catholic Art and History is, pointedly, not the East Harlem, or Italian American, museum of Catholic art and history. Nor is it connected to the primary East Harlem Italian church, as all the staff took pains to remind me, despite its location. Indeed, to enter the museum's grand interior, with sparkling marble floors, is to be anything but reminded of the rather shabby church next door. The dissonance between the obvious wealth of the inside museum space and the grittiness of the streets outside cannot but hang over the experience of visiting the museum. And the anonymity of the funding source—not the Catholic Church, as I had first suspected, but,

instead “private donors”—exacerbated the out-of-placeness of this material cultural artifact.

One of the museum’s opening exhibits was “Viva Mexico!” a photographic essay by Daniel Nadler. At the bottom of the accompanying information sheet was the note: “The National Museum of Catholic Art and History dedicates Viva Mexico! to the people of East Harlem. This is the first in a series of exhibitions dedicated to the ethnic diversity of our community.” The exhibit contained unremarkable photographs of Mexicans and, of course, of churches and cathedrals. As a whole it conveyed Catholic religiosity in Mexico and perhaps religiousness among Mexican peoples, as well. On my first visit in August 2005, the museum promised, in “future exhibits,” one on Our Lady of Guadalupe, another on East Harlem communities, and one on Haitian folk art (the first two of which have been realized). The former, “Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: J. Michael Walker’s Life with the Virgin and Saints,” features a U.S. (Arkansas) man’s religious encounter with the Virgin and a transnational religious imaginary drawn in colored pencil. Some of the introductory text is in Spanish, culled from writings on the art by a Mexican religious figure.

Concern with Mexico and Mexicans, as a kind of nod to religious diversity within Catholic social formations, might be posed against other “diversity” frameworks, most obviously, those that lie in the museum’s vicinity. Certainly Catholicism has always been concerned with its own global potential and constitution, but this particular iteration of the religious is also located in a time and place, of contemporary East Harlem. Yet in that extrapolation, in reading this content, inevitably, as a gesture toward Mexican migrants in the area, most astonishing is what does not appear: Puerto Ricans. This museum’s unspoken is the significant historical trauma that Italian Americans understand to have stimulated their demise, as well as the real lived border negotiations in the place. When Puerto Ricans came to East Harlem in the 1940s, the established Italian American community there was already beginning to decline, but in this, as in all “successions,” intense conflicts over territory and culture’s place in that shift broke out.

To the argument that this museum is making an explicitly *transnational* address, with transnational content (Mexico, Haiti, a current exhibition on Cuba), I would answer that museums are, inevitably, the sites of ghostly remains that make claims on the future. For the Catholic museum, which, in its location in the middle of old Italian Harlem, cannot but be seeking to establish some sort of foothold in the production of East Harlem as a historical place, to skip ahead and first give space to an exhibit about the residents who have been remaking the place that Puerto Ricans remade is a rather powerful example of surrogation in Roach’s sense: deferment, substitution, and ultimately, I would suggest, absence. The willingness to take on more secular material in the “East Harlem album,” which depicted early Italian immigrant communities, resounds loudly alongside the silence about Puerto

Ricans.⁵ And the silence expressed in material culture parallels that evoked in the cultural performance of the festa next door.

Devotion, as an almost self-described grammatical structure for the mingling of differences (like its doppelgänger *multiculturalism*) cannot, of course, level differences that matter. If it was accommodating in the case of Haitians in the festa, devotion does function as an alibi for exclusion in the case of Puerto Ricans. Italian Catholics who lived in East Harlem often, in conversation, point to the lack of religiosity among Puerto Ricans and express their distaste for perceived lack of family ties. Thus the overpowering image of poverty and drugs, associated with Puerto Rican Harlemites through the 1960s, at least, acquires a new kind of energy for those displaced Italians through their attachments to their own church. But in not inhabiting the category of immediate or literal threat to community, Haitians and now Mexicans (even in the same geographic area, but decades removed) can safely be "included" in devotional projects. The threat to territory, then, is of lasting significance in the narrational sphere, even when the actual conflicts are of a bygone era.

This actual political-cultural exercise of devotion seems to be predicated on the conception of autonomous ethnic experience (Haitians having their own relationship to the Madonna, Italians having theirs). But of course there is nothing autonomous about any social experience or, for that matter, identification. Italian American ethnicity like all identity is relational, in this case in Harlem very much constructed vis-à-vis Puerto Ricans, though of course the neoliberal (and multicultural) moment has produced the need to argue that it is *real* or at least corresponding to a particular site. What appears at the edges and underneath authorized community discourse (and its reception) is the long half-life to border encounters.

Displacements of Spanish Harlem

If the National Museum of Catholic Art and History chose not to mention Puerto Ricans, at least in its opening exhibits, the "El Barrio" exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York, also in 2005, detailed the development of the Puerto Rican community in East Harlem through photographs and other artifacts from the center of that representational body, rarely if ever mentioning other groups.⁶ Despite the historical backdrop to the development of "El Barrio" being constructed by Puerto Ricans moving into "Italian" Harlem, the exhibit mentions only one Italian American, Congressman Vito Marcantonio, a strong advocate for Puerto Rican rights, who was viewed by many as traitorous to the Italian American community for this very reason. But the "El Barrio" exhibit's other was not Italians, who, in time, Puerto Ricans successfully displaced or overcame in East Harlem territory, but a more contemporary Latino presence in the barrio: the Mexicans.

The last two decades, at least, have seen the steady influx of largely Mexi-

can immigrants, drawn to East Harlem because of its low rents and accessibility to public transportation, important to those, particularly, who are not documented and therefore unable to obtain drivers' licenses or other forms of identification. Though often portrayed as a "new" community and, in fact, quite invisible to many New Yorkers,⁷ Mexican East Harlem residents comprise a community that is now mature enough to have representational bodies and a consuming class that has spawned a range of service-based businesses (not to mention the starting capital necessary for those shops). More broadly, Mexicans have a real presence in the area that is constituted as much by the material signs of residence and consumption as by the inhabiting of public space, physically, in soccer games in the parks and, more symbolically, in the references to Mexican states in shop windows, or the selling of tamales on 116th Street. One might even make the argument that Mexicans, as Latin American siblings of Puerto Ricans, might have some living claim to the Spanish-termed "El Barrio," if not in its historical particularity then at least in its generic meaning.

But even as Mexicans and Puerto Ricans sometimes speak the same language,⁸ and share the lament over the pace of change and the effects of rising rents—that they will no longer be able to afford to inhabit East Harlem—they also compete actively for a kind of cultural ownership over the place. Puerto Ricans' loss in that realm is keenly felt, as Mexican shops dominate the main commercial arteries, at least, and this loss is often commented upon and hotly debated in the ethnic and neighborhood press. As one priest in the neighborhood, who ministers to a largely Mexican and Central American congregation, put it: the "El Barrio" exhibit was like "the last hurrah," put up precisely at the moment when the character of the neighborhoods, the demographic balance, the dominance of commercial activity, are in the midst of profound transformation.⁹ That Spanish-speaking Mexican residents might also make up East Harlem's *barrio*, then, was a possibility unaccounted for, or most likely suppressed, by the ideological work and placement of the exhibit—at a crucial public moment, when the catalog of cultural responses to gentrification must be aired. It was a silence that, ultimately, betrayed the complex and unpredictable turns of historical transformation and the depth of feeling attached to those shifts.

Walking Across Harlem Divides

Walking across 116th Street is to derive a sense of the multiplicity of Harlem. Moving from west to east, there are first African American and then African communities that form an eastern border to Columbia University, in which we could remember the famous protests in Morningside Park over the plans to build a university gym, protests that called into question the boundaries of differently classed communities. Markers of Senegalese and Ivory Coast resi-

dence and commerce appear as we cross over Fifth Avenue, and then, farther east, the beginnings of mostly Mexican restaurants and shops on the street.

In 2005, that walk across 116th Street passed by the old Italian Morrone Bakery, a remnant, one might say, of Italian Harlem, but also a business that at that time struggled to project itself into the future, with a professional website and a campaign to be included in the production of East Harlem. Even before the economic downturn that has more recently affected the area, the bakery's attempt to stake a nostalgic claim in the "new" East Harlem failed, and Morrone closed its doors on August 19, 2007. Its website survival story about itself in 2005 was illuminating, a veritable document on the repressed silences of history, constructed in such a way as to completely elide any mention of Puerto Ricans. The main historical authority cited in the text is Peter Rofrano, priest of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who speaks nostalgically and familiarly of the days of his youth when Italians dominated the area. Strikingly, the story told of Italian entry into the area is one of persecution: "When Italians started moving to East Harlem in the 1880s, they were resented and bullied by the Irish and German immigrants who then held sway in the neighborhood" (Morrone Bakery, n.d.). Moves out of Harlem are encapsulated by the single sentence: "Most of the Italians abandoned the neighborhood." With nary a word about Puerto Ricans or, for that matter, any other subsequent immigrations.

The narrative then jumps, chronologically, to 2000, to a story of how the bakery was maintained by various family contributions. Gentrification provides the bookend for the saga, and Morrone's takes a share of that, through, again, the production of itself as culturally authentic, even ethnic: "Perhaps cheap rent is not the only allure. The neighborhood's gritty, intriguing past and the continued presence of a few of the venerable old Italian establishments—Morrone's, Rex's Italian Ices, Rao's, Andy's Tavern—may also partially account for the latest settlement of upwardly mobile immigrants" (Morrone Bakery, n.d.). Tying its future to its connection to a once vital community in East Harlem, Morrone's says, in effect, that history, at least the portable, discrete, and seamlessly produced variety, matters. This institution, like others, in 2005 militated actively against popular accusations of its being a relic, or residual, and all that that implies. Its demise, however, spoke volumes about the limited power of such stories of the past in the face of economic marches toward another future.

The 116th Street route through Harlem also contains other sorts of ruins. Just after Lenox Avenue, the African Market, also known as the Masjid Malcolm Shabazz Market, is a space for a variety of African vendors, largely Senegalese. Having been moved by Rudolph Giuliani in the early 1990s, as part of a general "clean-up" program, the "new" African market is a ghostly affair, rather desolate during the weekdays, with a sense of emptiness and loss (Stoller 2002). So too, does one feel the passing of a kind of community upon the

entrance to La Marqueta, just below 116th Street on Park, once the social and economic center of the Puerto Rican community but also a space for many other groups to shop for produce and other goods and to mingle in differences of all kinds. On the 2005 weekday there were four vendors, only two of whom seemed to be active, with the other two sleeping.

An alternative sign of the future appears just west of Madison Avenue: a picture of a small Bloomingdale's-like shopping bag, branded with "El Barrio." This is the image chosen by the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation (EHBCC) to represent its campaign to remake East Harlem to be a central site of consumption for a range of neighborhood populations and tourists. Underwriting this capitalist program, though, are complex dreams of community. The EHBCC takes into account diversity and tells a future-oriented story of place that gathers up many different kinds of community histories and indications of difference. On the first level, there is the discourse of racial insurgence. A kind of Puerto Rican nationalism, performed in and through the "El Barrio" exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York, is not incompatible with the neoliberal story of transformation. This vision of El Barrio is one that the EHBCC seizes upon to propose, for example, the restoration of La Marqueta to its former glory.¹⁰ Historical background suffuses the dreams. Indeed, upon entering the "El Barrio" exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York, visitors see a picture of the 1940s market, with a caption about the East Harlem renovating venture. Linking the earlier dominance of Puerto Ricans in the area to a future where an important public symbol of Spanish Harlem has been resurrected can only be achieved through the narrative reconstruction of presence, indeed, of retaining and returning Puerto Rican residents. But the capitalist plans incorporate the realities of both community diversity and gentrification. The proposal argued that La Marqueta can become a commercial center and public space that will bring in many different kinds of peoples (as it once did), but now will be directed at a more contemporary mix: not just Puerto Ricans from the area, but also artists and new residents interested in cultural variety, African Americans, Mexicans, and others.

The story about economic progress, political autonomy, and multicultural cooperation that the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation peddles, in fact, is a startlingly compelling one, even to those who might be opposed to this model of development. Its concern with public space is collective, and its address to a particular kind of urban experience is cosmopolitan. Yet like other capital parables that are compelling in their own way, mirroring as they do dominant interpretations of culture and economy, this narration relies on selectively reviving a collection of memories while suppressing others (memories, experiences, realities). It can only be *read* in place, not its original place, but in a *network* of other stories, even those that might seem disconnected. We might ask, in fact, whether this vision really accounts for the depth of history, despite its acknowledgment of history. And even the model of differences liv-

ing side by side simply cannot address the clashes (and the intimacies) of entry, departure, loss, and death that are the lived experience of difference.

George Yúdice (2003) has made a powerful argument for seeing "culture as resource," subject to and embedded in neoliberalism. His analysis of many contemporary uses of culture in the Americas reveals how distinctions many scholars hold fast to—such as those between high and low, folk and mass, and symbolic and material—wear away as cultural value is indexed to new political economies. If this insight about operationalized culture seems to explain the social demands facing the religious procession, the museum exhibits, and the EHBC, I believe it also points to the need to attend more closely to the *spaces* of neoliberalism that are produced by movement among the "perceived," "conceived," as well as the "lived" registers (Lefebvre 1991). It asks us to read stories of culture in place.

The more urgent and political question is whether we really know how to talk about diversity and history at one and the same time. Part of the experience of the modern city is that seemingly divergent experiences of place can exist side by side, as their expressions and performances may appear to, as well. But the reality on the ground is that identity is always relational and communities are always in contact. Ethnic or racial groups fading out is a story that expresses a broader and continuing experience of change. The places of Harlem have always been on the verge of disappearance, just as many modern cities have. I have hoped to show here how the space of nostalgia in the present may unlock something productive, in forcefully asserting differences that matter, and a kind of impulse to presence, ironically, just as it processes loss. But the stories that the ethnographic moments discussed bring to life open up experiences that constitute the place as much by negation as by voice. As such their lack of intertextuality and their inability to incorporate other stories on their margins, or their textual others, say a great deal about the losses that endure into the present. These occasions challenge how the place has been narrativized, in more straightforward ways, from presence into absence. And they compel us to read for what is pushed to the edges.

The ruins themselves are not simply some ur-sign of absence, they are utterly present in the everyday. They fill in the streets that threaten to be swept through and emptied by capitalist gentrification. Stories of the past make claims on the future, not through the coherence that, say, the EHBC proposes, but instead through a kind of narrative chaos, on the ground, as a kind of life that may be a response to the overwhelming power of capitalism. In this way, we might begin to see neoliberalism's effects as contradictory and carrying within them some small seeds of a possible challenge.

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Part IV

Agency and Ambivalence

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Chapter 12

Performing *Laïcité*

Gender, Agency, and Neoliberalism Among Algerians in France

JANE E. GOODMAN

In March 1994, the phone rang in my host family's apartment in the suburbs of Paris, where I had been staying since escalating civil conflict had forced me to leave the Algerian Berber village I call Amkan (a pseudonym) the previous December. On the line was Kamal (a pseudonym), one of Amkan's more than two thousand immigrants living in Paris.¹ He had been thinking, he told me, that younger immigrants from Amkan—many born and raised in France—needed a way to get to know each other. He had a vision of a new kind of organization—in his words, “an association for the twenty-first century” (*une association caractère l'an 2000*)—that would bring together Amkan immigrants in Paris across gendered, generational, and patrilineage-based lines. But to succeed, this enterprise needed women. Could I possibly call Zahra (a pseudonym), one of my immigrant friends from the village, and see if she would be willing to help out?

Kamal's vision of an association for the twenty-first century was linked to a debate raging in Algeria about the nation's future. Since the mid-1980s, Algeria had been engaged in various neoliberal reforms. Plummeting global prices of hydrocarbons—a mainstay of Algeria's economy—precipitated an economic crisis that ultimately forced Algeria to accept a stringent IMF (International Monetary Fund) program of structural adjustment. As elsewhere, this would eventually entail the privatization of state-owned enterprises, trade liberalization, the removal of state subsidies of basic goods, and debt restructuring.² These economic measures were initially accompanied by a degree of political liberalization, the most important change being the 1987 passage of a law to allow citizens to form nonpolitical voluntary associations without government authorization.³ This was a significant concession in the Algerian context. A single-party socialist state since achieving independence from France in 1962, Algeria had been run by the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN) essentially as a military dictatorship with a civilian veneer. Most Algerians referred to the government as *Le Pouvoir* (The

Power), a term that conveyed their sense that the workings of the state were in the hands of an impenetrable junta-like clan, utterly inaccessible to ordinary citizens.

But by 1987, granting citizens the right to form voluntary associations was hardly enough to halt the population's growing discontent, fueled by double-digit unemployment, skyrocketing inflation, shortages of subsistence goods, and a severe housing crisis. In October 1988, thousands of young men took to the streets—initially in the capital city Algiers, and eventually in urban areas across much of northern Algeria. Six days of rioting were ultimately halted by the military, but at a high cost: Tanks fired on crowds of civilians, killing up to five hundred and injuring many more.⁴ The government regained control only by agreeing to accelerate democratic reforms. The state constitution was redrafted in 1989 to permit new political parties, and elections were promised. Some sixty parties rapidly formed, including the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique de Salut, FIS), legalized in September 1989. At the same time, a relatively independent Algerian press was for the first time permitted; dozens of new newspapers appeared almost overnight (see Metref 1996). Civic associations sprung up across the country, representing a diverse array of interests, opinions, and opportunities. When the most popular Islamist party, the Islamic Salvation Front, was poised to gain control of the Algerian National Assembly in December 1991, an army-backed coup d'état brought the electoral process to a halt, sparking a decade of insurgency.⁵ But if elections were temporarily suspended, public debate about Algeria's future only intensified.

Although their country was clearly in the throes of accelerated neoliberal reform, neoliberalism was not a term that most Algerians could have articulated. Instead, in the aftermath of 1988 they began to position themselves around two “projects of society” (*projets de société*), broadly construed as secular-democratic (*laïque*) and Islamist. In Algerian parlance, a project of society contains political, social, and subjective dimensions. It entails a set of premises and principles on which a national government should be founded (in this case, democratic governance versus shari'a law). It involves particular forms of social conduct, ranging from modes of women's dress (e.g., full hijab, headscarf, or bareheaded; length of skirt; and so on) and styles of self-adornment (e.g., makeup, perfume) to consumption of alcohol and tobacco products to forms of interaction between men and women in public space. Finally, Algerians contend that a project of society rests on a particular “mentality” (*mentalité*), which I understand as a form of subjectivity that entails both a way of thinking and a style of self-positioning in relation to an articulated worldview.⁶ While the political, social, and personal dimensions of a project of society should in theory align, in practice, they do not necessarily do so, as will become clear below.

In my discussion of the interlocking political, social, and subjective dimen-

sions of Algeria's "projects of society," I develop and extend John Bowen's distinction between the political and social aspects of *laïcité* as it is articulated in France (Bowen 2004a and 2007). Bowen defines "political *laïcité*" as the official separation of church and state, whereas "social *laïcité*" entails a further absence of all signs of religious affiliation from the public sphere (Bowen 2004a: 46). In Algeria, the meaning of *laïcité* is broader still. Consider the comments of secular-democratic Algerian columnist Tahar Djaout in a May 1993 newspaper column. He cast the democrats as "the family that moves forward" and their Islamist opponents, "the family that moves backward" (Djaout 1993: 15). For Djaout, to move forward meant not only to work toward transparent, democratically run institutions and away from factional or clan-based politics. It also entailed cultivating an open-minded rather than a fatalistic worldview and advocating for gender parity in everything from mode of dress to access to education, the workforce, and even political office. To move backward was to return to a past social order perceived as autocratic and obscurantist.

As Djaout's column makes apparent, *laïcité* in the Algerian case serves to gloss a broad secular-democratic orientation to politics, social practices, and personhood. As such, it articulates with Talal Asad's definition of secularism as "an enactment by which a *political medium* (representation of citizenship) redefines and transcends particular and differentiating practices of the self that are articulated through class, gender, and religion" (Asad 2003: 5). Secularism, in this view, aligns closely with what Charles Taylor, Saba Mahmood, and others have called a modern social imaginary. Going well beyond a mere separation of religion from the state, this new imaginary involves "the moral reconstruction of public and private life" (Mahmood 2005: 75). As such, it works to "mediate people's identities, help shape their sensibilities, and guarantee their experience" (Asad 2003: 14). Underwriting the modern social imaginary are new forms of subjectivity and agency: secularism demands a subject who acts on the basis of free will rather than custom, tradition, religious dictates, or other parochial allegiances. The secular self, in short, is to be performed in new ways, demonstrating a capacity to act as an autonomous, self-mastering agent unencumbered by "age-old forms and structures" (Taylor 2004: 175).

Yet the Algerian case complicates these formulations in one key respect: in Algeria, gender has emerged as a privileged site around which the success of the entire secularist project can be evaluated. Taylor omits gender entirely from his discussion (as did Jürgen Habermas before him). Mahmood eloquently discusses alternative forms of agency enacted by nonsecular women participants in the Egyptian piety movement, but does not take up the ways that Egyptian secularism might also be differentially gendered. Implicit in both of their work is the presumption that in theory, secularism should be gender neutral. For Algerian democrats, in contrast, to claim an allegiance to

laïcité is to argue specifically for a set of social practices and mentalities that would promote women's participation in the Algerian public sphere. In broad terms, while Islamists call for gender segregation, secularists endorse what Algerians call *la mixité*—awkwardly translated as “mixed-gender interaction”—in which men and women cohabit the same public space on apparently equal footing. Secularist parties are virtually required to perform their *laïcité* by displaying women in prominent public positions. Without such an explicit public positioning of women, Algerian secularists invite accusations that they are simply perpetuating gender segregation under a neoliberal veneer. This debate took an especially bloody turn in the mid-1990s, when women's bodies literally were caught in the crossfire. The Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armée, GIA) announced that it would start shooting at unveiled women; in return, Berber militias threatened to target women who chose to veil. In such a climate, a man's position—or as Algerians would say, his mentality—with regard to *la mixité* became the most telling index of his political leanings. (Djaout himself, I regretfully add, was assassinated by the Armed Islamic Group in 1993.)

In this chapter, I consider how a group of Algerians living in Paris mobilized debates about the Algerian projects of society as a way to create new forums for *laïcité* in the diaspora. Of interest to these immigrants—all of whom traced their ancestry to the Kabyle Berber village of Amkan—was less the form of Algeria's government (political *laïcité*) than the ways that they could develop and promote the social and subjective dimensions of *laïcité* within their own diasporic village community, particularly with regard to gender. My focus is on their attempt to create a cultural association for the Amkan community in Paris that would serve as a vehicle through which new kinds of relationships and mentalities could be performatively modeled and pedagogically inculcated. I focus on particular gendered performances as sites where new social practices were enacted and contested, highlighting several moments of tension and ambivalence that emerged as the association took shape.

In linking the creation of a Paris-based association to debates that were transpiring in Algeria, I draw on Paul Silverstein's notion of transpolitics (2004), which takes the dialectical constitution of discourses and practices between metropole and postcolony as an ethnographic and analytical location in its own right. By the closing decades of the twentieth century, gender had clearly emerged as a key site around which transpolitical debates were taking shape.⁷ In Algeria, a new family code had been adopted in 1984 that—from a secularist and feminist vantage point—essentially turned women into “eternal minors” (Messaoudi 1998: 54), limiting their rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, work, and education and restricting their right to leave the Algerian territory (Ministère de l'Information et de la Culture 1988). While the code did not mandate a particular form of female dress, the rising popularity of Islamist groups in the same years led to mounting pressures on Algerian

women to adopt the hijab, the full-body veil whose style had been newly imported from Egypt. Between my first visit to Algeria in August of 1988 (six weeks before the October uprisings) and my next visit in June of 1990, I noticed a marked increase of young women in hijabs on the streets of Algiers. During those two years, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), newly legalized, had become the most popular party in the country, winning municipal elections everywhere but in Kabylia. In France at virtually the same moment, the “headscarf affairs” were erupting: beginning in September of 1989, Franco-Algerian women were periodically expelled from the public schools for refusing to remove their headscarves. In France, the headscarf came to be seen as a challenge to “social laïcité” (Bowen 2004a); as such, it was perceived as threatening both “Republican values of gender equality” (Bowen 2004b: 34) and the secular fabric of the French nation (Bowen 2004b; P. Silverstein 2004).

When Kamal phoned me, then, in March of 1994, his plea that I contact my friend Zahra was articulated against the backdrop of controversies and debates about women in public space that spanned the Mediterranean. At the same time, however, Kamal was also putting into play a regional affiliation of Kabyle Berbers with secular democracy.

Berbers, Ethnicity, and Secular Democracy

In the Kabyle Berber region where Amkan is located, the secular-democratic project was overwhelmingly favored during the early 1990s. This was not because Berbers are not Muslim—they almost unanimously adhere to the Islamic faith. But Berbers also constitute a large ethnolinguistic minority whose language and heritage had long been discounted and even suppressed by the Arabo-Islamic Algerian regime.⁸ This made it more plausible for Berbers to constitute themselves, with regard to the state, in cultural rather than religious terms. Both Berber-dominated political parties⁹ and the popular grassroots Berber Cultural Movement¹⁰ called for a pluralist state that could accommodate their cultural and linguistic difference. Secular democracy provided a well-established, authoritative discourse that could encompass Berbers’ cultural and linguistic agenda while clearly demarcating them from their Islamist counterparts.

Yet in a Kabyle village, social and political life are hardly organized in secular-democratic terms. A village is not an “abstract equality of individual citizens” (Asad 2003: 173) but is governed by patrilineal and gendered organizations of public discourse. The primary decision-making body is called *tajmaʿat*, or village committee (*comité du village*). Traditionally, the social organization of discourse in *tajmaʿat* followed generational and patrilineal lines, with senior men of the most powerful patrilineages granted the first rights to speak. In the Algerian village of Amkan, participation in *tajmaʿat* involves all adult men, who come together each week in each of Amkan’s four village

sections. Village sections are largely organized around patrilineal affiliation, with several large, closely interrelated patrilineages comprising each section. The large Amkan immigrant community in Paris has its own organization, also called the *tajmaʿat*, or village committee. In Paris, this committee is made up of a single representative from each village section. The *tajmaʿat* remains an exclusively male institution in both Algeria and Paris.

For the increasing number of young Kabyle men who were defining themselves nationally in secular-democratic terms, the social organization of their own villages posed a problem. Critical of what they perceived as the cronyism, factionalism, and lack of transparency in the *tajmaʿat*, they sought to establish new public forums that would be open to all villagers, regardless of patrilineage, age, and especially gender. Cultural associations, newly permitted by the 1987 law, were a key vehicle through which these young activists hoped to bring villagers together in new ways. At the end of 1989, 154 cultural associations had been established in Kabylia, including one based in the village of Amkan. By 1995, there were reportedly more than one thousand cultural associations in the Kabyle region (Chaker 1995). These associations mounted plays, staged exhibits, organized sports tournaments, and created children's choruses as a way to change villagers' mentalities, particularly with regard to gender. In Amkan, association members created a mixed-gender children's chorus in an attempt to normalize relationships between young boys and girls (see J. Goodman 1996 and 2005).

Amkan in Paris

In Paris, the challenges were different. Unlike the first generations of migrants, who worked in French factories for part of the year but returned to Algeria for the planting season, by the 1990s, most immigrants from Amkan had been living in Paris for decades, engaged in professional careers or trades, and had raised their children in the French metropolis. And whereas the first immigrants tended to settle together in hotels in the same Parisian neighborhood, members of later generations had purchased homes in a number of different outlying suburbs. With immigrants from Amkan scattered all over the metropolitan region, most never saw each other unless they happened to be vacationing in Algeria at the same time. When Kamal telephoned me, then, in March 1994, his vision of an association for the twenty-first century entailed creating a new space where immigrants could voluntarily choose to congregate around matters of common interest.

For Kamal's project to work, he needed women—and not just any women. He needed women who were both well-respected in the village and well-versed in the modes of public discourse that creating a voluntary association would require. My friend Zahra fit the bill. Zahra, twenty-three, had lived in France since she was two years old and came from a highly respected family.

A university student, she was also active in the large Berber Cultural Association (Association de Culture Berbère, ACB) in Paris. Her parents and all but one of her siblings were in France, where they owned a comfortable home in the suburbs of Paris. Her oldest brother had remained in Algeria; in 1994, he was at the head of the Algeria-based village committee.

Kamal could not call Zahra directly without violating norms of propriety and jeopardizing the enterprise before it got off the ground. I was the perfect go-between. I was entirely outside the patrilineal system and could not be associated with a particular group or set of interests. Perhaps, as an American woman traveling alone and engaged in my own research, I also modeled for him what was possible within *laïcité*: that is, I provided an example of the kind of independent, self-directed female performance that he claimed would be necessary in the association. In any case, I was by that point respected in the village, credible—and a woman. Best of all, I knew Zahra well—we had met in a Berber language class and soon became fast friends.

When I called Zahra, she was interested but did not immediately acquiesce. After sounding out her network and learning that Kamal was respected in the village, she agreed to come to a meeting, bringing her sister and several female cousins along. So it was that a few weeks after Kamal's phone call, thirteen of us—twelve Amkan residents (seven men and five women) plus myself—met in a café owned by one of the men. Of the seven men, one (I'll call him Djamal) belonged to the long-established village committee in Paris and had been specially invited by Kamal so as not to alienate the committee from the start.

This initial meeting was already novel: there was no precedent for distantly related men and women to come together in a Parisian café. In this and the next several meetings, by far the greatest amount of time was spent talking about how to position the association itself: What was its mission, how would it take shape, and especially, how would it gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Amkan communities in both Paris and Algeria? The difficulty of the enterprise was succinctly voiced by Kamal: "If we succeed in getting people to acknowledge that this kind of meeting exists," he said, "it's already a step forward."

Early discussions focused on the formal structure of the association. Would it fall under the umbrella of the existing village committee? Or would it be established under the terms of French law governing the association of foreigners in France? Zahra was the first to frame these as alternatives: "Will we register [the association] with the police [i.e., under the French law of 1901],"¹¹ she asked, "or continue in the old way?" Some argued that with the assistance of the village committee, the association could gain members and financial support quickly. Djamal presented himself as someone who could marshal village committee backing, offering to discuss the association with the other four members and to "tell them to support it." He emphasized the force behind a "unanimous decision," contending that when the village committee threw itself behind a project, it was sure to gain credibility. Kamal and others,

including several of the women, countered Djamal's claims by recasting the village committee in relation to "outmoded" and "cumbersome" structures; it operated, Kamal contended, through cronyism, factional pressures, and collective obligations rather than voluntary choice. While Djamal thought the advantages of a village committee mandate for the association outweighed these concerns, most of the other men, and all of the women, disagreed. In contrast, they argued, structuring the association in relation to French law would provide it autonomy and enable it to organize events and activities as it saw fit. And it would be voluntary—no one would be forced to attend or contribute, the way they would be under a village committee mandate. Despite the desire to move away from a lineage-based organization, however, it proved difficult for even Kamal to discuss questions of recruitment without recourse to lineage considerations. At times, Kamal spoke about recruitment targets in relation to a notion that entire lineages or village sections could be swayed through the presence of a few key individuals. If the village committee were not the vehicle through which such connections could be activated, another would have to be found.

At the second organizational meeting, the group of twelve had invited other villagers whom they viewed as open-minded, carefully selecting several men and women from each of Amkan's five village sections. Kamal opened by voicing his hope that a new kind of Amkan community in Paris could be created. He then gave the floor to Zahra, positioning her from the outset as someone with knowledge and authority. She spoke about potential projects of the association, evoking such possibilities as organizing cultural days or collecting medications for the Algerian village. She framed these initiatives in relation to such cultural or humanitarian missions as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders) whose legitimacy was already well established in France. Kamal then set Zahra's comments in relation to the mission of the larger Berber Cultural Association (ACB) in Paris: he passed out ACB brochures and linked Zahra to the ACB, explaining that she taught Berber language classes there. From the beginning, then, Kamal presented Zahra as experienced with association projects and Berber cultural activities, framed her as someone with specialized knowledge of how associations operate, and created specific opportunities for her to speak. Yet their voices were becoming comingled in ways that would soon prove problematic.

One participant again raised the issue of the association's structure: Would it be an "association 1901" (that is, one organized through the terms of French law)? Zahra and Kamal answered together in the affirmative. Zahra then provided a succinct overview of how associations are structured under this law: "Four or five people are at the head, another forty actively involved, the rest ordinary members. Usually, a president represents the association, a secretary keeps minutes and takes care of paperwork, and a treasurer handles finances. Active members join committees and organize events or projects, the others

just come to the events.” She then turned from these descriptive statements to ask a performative question that effectively brought the structure into being: “Who wants to be part of what?” Debate ensued about whether representatives should be drawn from each village section, but most countered this suggestion as reinforcing old ideas and feudal divisions. Participants also talked about what kinds of activities the association might offer. Once again, Zahra took the amorphous discussion and reshaped it into a summary statement of what she thought had been proposed: first, to make the association official; second, to bring Amkan immigrants together by sponsoring a conference on village history; and third, to attempt to raise money through a special event. She then asked another performative question: “How do we decide on the candidates [for office]?” Within two minutes, a slate of officers was proposed, and it was no surprise that she was nominated president. Without further discussion or vote, this slate was accepted. It was evenly split by gender, with a female president, a male vice president, and joint male-female appointments for secretary and treasurer. Kamal had not been nominated.

Over the course of the first few meetings, then, discursive conditions were put in place that enabled a young woman with Zahra’s credentials to assume a position of high visibility. At the association’s first public event, however—a conference on village history announced by letter to all Amkan residents of Paris—tensions surrounding Zahra’s role would come to the fore. The conference was to feature a series of presentations: Zahra had signed on to research the region’s early history; Kamal would speak about the history of emigration; and I had offered to prepare something on a sixteenth-century Berber kingdom. When the day of the event arrived, we met in a large room at the Berber Cultural Association in Paris’s twentieth district.

Meanwhile, pressure on Zahra had been building. Her father had warned her that she risked being viewed as the village donkey (*Pâne du village*) were she to associate herself with the new venture. A phone call from her oldest brother in Algeria, who had learned of the association, echoed this concern. While some of the other young women had also been pressured by their families, Zahra was in the most visible position. Perhaps, she worried, she was acting too fast. Zahra had enjoyed working on her short presentation, and shared with me her excitement about discovering references to Amkan in nineteenth-century colonial works. The day before the conference, however, she informed Kamal that if she were to read her own talk, she would provoke a family controversy. She would be responsible for writing the text, but he would have to find a replacement presenter. So it was that on the conference day, Kamal got up to read Zahra’s text.

Kamal was clearly uncomfortable. He rose to welcome people, then announced the day’s agenda. “The first part,” he told the audience of some fifty people, “will be on the origins of the village.” Despite Zahra’s absence as a speaker (she was seated in the audience), he invoked her presence in several

ways. First, he linked her work to my own presentation, making it sound like we had worked on a joint text that I would read: "Jane and Zahra have worked on Kabylia. . . . This part will be presented by Jane." He then added that he himself had "two or three lines to read to you" on the early history of the village. "I must tell you," he confessed, "that these three lines are the result of a labor of many hours spent in the library, and I will say that this was the work of Zahra." Kamal went on to read Zahra's statement, framing it as reported speech:

Kamal: "Zahra tells us that around the sixth and seventh centuries, the Zouaoua were located in the province of Bejaia, more precisely, between Bejaia and Dellys. They lived on the mountain peaks, inaccessible to outsiders . . ."

Here, Zahra interrupted: "You could perhaps explain who the Zouaoua were."

Kamal: "Go ahead, explain!"

Zahra: "The Ait Ghobri are our tribe, the Zouaoua is the race to which our tribe belonged."

Kamal's presentation of Zahra's text continued in a similar fashion. At one point, he could not make out her handwriting, and she had to explain what she meant. She went on to sum up her main points while remaining seated in the audience, speaking rapidly and with occasional nervous laughter.

In Erving Goffman's terms, Kamal chose to position himself as the animator—the presenter of the text—while framing Zahra as both author and principal, responsible for its organization and content (Goffman 1981). Kamal's reading was flat, uncreative, and distanced. Through his use of reported speech, his failure to contextualize the text, his inability even to make out parts of it, and through continuous references to Zahra as the author, he clearly displayed his discomfort. Indeed, Kamal called attention less to the text Zahra had prepared than to her refusal to present it. Simply put, she had stepped away from the subject position he sought to create, and he was furious. Later, he complained to me at length: If people like Zahra would not take responsibility for changing things, he lamented, they would never change. Perhaps, he wondered, it would not work after all to have her as president.

Kamal wanted Zahra to be a spokesperson for the association, and he strongly supported her performance in that role. When she sought less visibility, he felt that his own vision was threatened. To him, only a display of female leadership within the association would model new forms of social relationship and demarcate the association from the old mentalities. For Zahra, in contrast, creating credibility for the association—simply getting people like her parents to positively acknowledge its existence—required an approach that took into account their concerns about young women's public performance. Gradually, Zahra removed herself from positions of visibility. She deliberately signed her name illegibly on a letter that *la Présidente* (the [female] president) sent to Amkan immigrants, and she refused to appear on a panel at a subsequent association event.

Kamal's anger at Zahra's refusal to read her text is interpretable in two

ways, both pivoting on a premise of failure. First, drawing on neoliberal formulations of the subject as defined by free will and autonomy, he could construe her actions as a lack of autonomy and ultimately as a failure of agency. As Mahmood points out, this model “presupposes that there is a natural disjuncture between a person’s ‘true’ desires and those that are socially prescribed” (Mahmood 2005: 149). From this perspective, Zahra—unable to stand up to her father and brother—had simply subordinated her own wishes to family pressures. Alternatively, Kamal could interpret her act of stepping away from the spotlight as a sign of a failed alignment between her stated political vision and her subjective capacities. Zahra, in this view, had revealed that she must not be a true proponent of *laïcité* after all because she lacked the personal qualities that would bring this political vision into being.

Yet while Kamal had been unwilling even to telephone Zahra himself, he asked her to embody his vision of what an association for the twenty-first century should look like: she was to perform in such a way that she would almost single-handedly be responsible for, as Michael Warner puts it, “transform[ing] the available contexts of speech and indeed of publicness” in this immigrant village community (Warner 2002: 129). Although Kamal sought to create a new subject position for women, he neglected to consider the vulnerable position of the actual female subjects occupying this position, who would have to find a way to manage competing social expectations. As Nancy Fraser has noted, it is difficult to simply bracket off from a “formally inclusive public arena” forms of noninclusive or hierarchical social relationship operative in adjacent contexts (Fraser 1989: 118). Zahra had to find a way to make the same performance interpretable in relation to two entirely different sets of interests: the neoliberalizing vision of Kamal had to be made to articulate with the patrilineage-based concerns of her father and brother. Her choice was to speak from the sidelines, handing her text to Kamal while displaying her own labor in comments made from her seat in the audience. She adopted a related tactic when she affixed her virtually illegible signature to the association’s letter to Amkan residents of Paris, essentially putting her name under erasure, where it could be simultaneously deciphered and denied.

Conclusion

The performances entailed in the creation of this association complicate scholars’ understandings of the relationship between politics and personhood under conditions of emergent neoliberalism. These events were not about political *laïcité* in the strict sense: the form of the Algerian (or French) state was not the primary concern of Kamal, Zahra, or anyone else involved in creating the Amkan association in Paris. Rather, the ideological frame in which the Algerian conflict was occurring—one that pitted two projects of society against each other—served to animate debates about the social and subject-

tive aspects of *laïcité*. These issues were equally salient in France, albeit for somewhat different reasons.

As these performances make apparent, the terrain between the political, social, and subjective aspects of *laïcité* can be exceedingly difficult to navigate, challenging the very premise of the autonomous subject on which neoliberalism rests. For Kamal, to perform his own commitment to *laïcité* in all three dimensions entailed a requirement to display his own willingness to accept (and even to promote) women in a public and at least nominally authoritative role. More than Zahra's text, Kamal needed her body. Small wonder, then, that he was so angry: her refusal threatened his own subjectivity. In Zahra's case, in her capacity as a Berber language teacher or even a university student—contexts that demanded a highly public presentation of self—she was performing primarily as a political or an ethnic subject. In the Amkan association, however, she was also being asked to perform in relation to a set of generational and gendered affiliations (see Greenhouse, this volume) that could not be so readily incorporated into the neoliberal project. To interpret her actions only as a failure of will, a lack of vision, or, to recall Taylor's terms, as being "mired in age-old forms and structures" presumes that positive agency under neoliberal regimes can only be construed in terms of a transparent and singular alignment between politics, social conduct, and subjectivity—an alignment that ultimately neither Kamal nor Zahra was able to achieve. Instead, Zahra's actions seem to demonstrate a flexible and pragmatic sensitivity to the imbricated social contexts in which she found herself, a flexibility that Kamal was unable to reciprocate.

The performances entailed in the creation of this association also complicate understandings of secularism. Clearly, *laïcité* in Algerian discourse and practice cannot be understood as gender-neutral but is being linked to a highly marked display by men of women's bodies. The explicit gendering of *laïcité* in the Algerian case thus serves as a critique of conventional models of secularism, in which gender typically goes unmarked.

Finally, performance events like the ones discussed here bring into sharp relief the tensions and ambivalences that subjects face as they position themselves simultaneously within emerging neoliberal regimes and in relation to social contexts that may be governed by alternative ways of conjoining subjectivity, social relations, and politics. When we train our ethnographic attention on "how people live the secular" (Asad 2003: 15), we see these struggles as they develop. We gain a new vantage point on the specific and often creative ways in which actors navigate between what at first glance may seem to be competing or even incompatible ways of constituting selves. Attending to the fashioning of public identities thus yields a more nuanced understanding of the neoliberal project as an emergent configuration of links between politics and personhood that can unfold in jagged, ambivalent, and locally specific ways.

Chapter 13

The “Daughters of Soul” Tour and the Politics and Possibilities of Black Music

MAUREEN MAHON

In the spring of 2004, I received an e-mail announcing a concert called “Daughters of Soul.” As a fan, I found the tour description enticing. As a cultural anthropologist who studies contemporary African American musicians, I was curious about what the Daughters of Soul might mean in academic terms. Examining the ways and reasons cultural producers use artistic forms for expressive purposes—be they aesthetic, political, or both—is a central research concern for me. The arts and media are moneymaking businesses and sites of consumer entertainment, but they are also arenas in which definitions of identity and relations of power are articulated and contested, reproduced and reconfigured. For the artists and their audiences, music, film, literature, and the visual arts are important because they give aesthetic pleasure, provide inspiration, stir aggravation, and sustain life in both economic and entertainment terms. For anthropologists, these forms are significant because they are tangible products of human activity through which individuals tell themselves and others who they are and what they value. In short, the arts and media provide a map of what matters to cultural producers and the communities that support or criticize their work. Furthermore, these cultural productions are in many cases the sites and subjects of sociopolitical struggle and activism; in other words, they are a significant form of cultural politics. This chapter, a discussion of the conceptualization and execution of the Daughters of Soul tour, explores the cultural politics of black women’s musical production and the politics and possibilities of contemporary black music production in the age of neoliberalism.

The e-mail announcement described a tour that would play European jazz festivals and feature vocalists who had either a biological or stylistic link to African American soul music. Daughters of Soul is a two-hour concert featuring six lead vocalists, three backup singers, and a four-piece band. On its initial run in 2004, it played four dates at three European jazz festivals: the Nice Jazz Festival, Nice, France; the Pori Jazz Festival, Pori, Finland; and the

Jazzaldia Festival, San Sebastián, Spain. I was intrigued by a lineup that included the daughters of Donny Hathaway, Chaka Khan, and Nina Simone—Lalah Hathaway, Indira Khan, and Lisa Simone. Alongside them would be women who were pioneering artists in the field of black rock: Nona Hendryx, a founding member of the all-female, black rock group Labelle; Joyce Kennedy, a vocalist in the black funk metal band Mother's Finest; and Sandra St. Victor of the Family Stand, a black rock band that won critical praise with its innovative, genre-spanning 1991 album *Moon in Scorpio*. The latter three artists had developed long and varied careers; for example, St. Victor and her bandmates achieved chart success with their writing and production of several songs on Paula Abdul's 1991 multiplatinum pop album *Spellbound*. Partly because of their choice of musical genre, however, these black women were not in the mainstream of contemporary black music, a field dominated by rap, dance, and R&B during the last twenty-five years. For black women rockers in rock's white-male-dominated scene, the challenges were numerous. Their gender and race mark them as doubly outside the white male arena of rock 'n' roll. Like white women they are intruding in male space and like black men they are treading on white territory. As black women, they have to fight for recognition and respect as legitimate rock performers. St. Victor, a singer and songwriter, conceptualized the concert tour package to provide a performance opportunity for herself and musicians with whom she wanted to work in musical styles of their choosing. Using a broad definition of soul that embraced rock and funk, the Daughters of Soul tour advanced an expansive version of contemporary black American musical performance into the public sphere.

In drawing attention to the strategies St. Victor and her colleagues used in the design and execution of their tour, I want to highlight some of the complexities and contradictions that are part of the production and analysis of popular culture forms. Anthropologist Dorinne Kondo has observed that fashion, theater, and the arts are "contradictory sites of pleasure and contestation" (Kondo 1997: 4). Furthermore, she notes, the professional artists who are producing work in these arenas are often engaged in "complicitous critique" (Kondo 1997: 144). Kondo is sensitive to the need to find a way to analyze and characterize efforts to challenge a field while still working within that field. She calls on scholars to seek ways to "engage the complex politics of pleasure and of 'resistance' when nothing is beyond commodification or beyond the dominant" (Kondo 1997: 5; cf. Savigliano 1995). She stresses that it is especially important to address these issues when dealing with minoritized producers who typically work both within and against dominant paradigms of race, gender, and class. The Daughters of Soul exemplify this condition. They exploited and invested in dominant images and expectations in order to get a platform for a production that both contested and reproduced prevailing images of black women.

Ethnographers—who are similarly operating within and against the dominant frames of their field—can exploit the strengths of ethnography to uncover and analyze the strategic, sometimes contradictory, ways cultural producers position themselves and their work. In addition to participating, observing, and interviewing, ethnographers must attend to the “strategic shifts” people make as they negotiate between the rubrics of complicit and resistant behavior in order to achieve their goals. I see this focus as being aligned with the efforts of scholars who are trying to balance between “too much construction (textual, discursive, etc.) on the one hand, [and] too much making (decontextualized ‘resistance’) on the other” and who use practice theory, a “framework that theorizes a necessary dialectic between the two extremes” (Ortner 1994: 4) to explain social processes. Bringing this kind of ethnographic awareness to bear on popular culture producers working in the context of neoliberalism enables the revelation of links between political engagement, market forces, and identity. For black cultural producers in the post-civil rights era, for example, popular culture—especially music—is a form of capital. Black music and musical performance have a market value that provides access and mobility that older civil rights discourses of rights and practices of organization, it seems, no longer do. Indeed, artists can use musical performance to critique dominant ideologies when other avenues of contestation are closed off. Significantly, the musical mobilization I discuss here is shaped by the politics of race, gender, and location. The shift in venue from the United States to Europe offered performance opportunities not readily available to black American women in the United States, but it also introduced concerns related to reception in the European context, particularly in terms of local understandings of race, gender, and sexuality. In this chapter, I use ethnography to reveal the interaction of personal and structural factors that shaped the choices the Daughters of Soul artists made as they mounted their transnational, transcultural tour.

Like other essays in this collection, my study shows the ways in which people assert themselves and their interests in the face of exclusion, acting according to their needs and their desires rather than operating solely within the limited confines of officially accepted or expected behavior. Consequently, an ethnographic analysis of the tour allows me to draw attention to the relationship between strategies and dreams, aspects of thought and action that are always a part of cultural production. Watching two performances of the concert—in San Sebastián and Nice—talking to the Daughters of Soul performers, listening in on their late-night strategy sessions, and witnessing the fruits of their creative labor underscored for me the importance of practices of dreaming, imagining, and envisioning. The starting point of creativity and activism, they are at the heart of human agency and play out within and against social and institutional structures. In his study of black political organizing (2002), historian Robin D. G. Kelley uses the evocative title *Freedom Dreams* to put the role of the imagination at the center of an analysis of social

change. His emphasis on dreams is unusual in studies of social movements, he says, but crucial, because “any serious motion toward freedom must begin in the mind” (Kelley 2002: 5). The struggle for social and political freedom that are the focus of the activists Kelley is writing about are distinct from but connected to the quest for aesthetic and creative freedom that concerns artists. In both cases, the acts of dreaming and doing in spite of what seems logically possible are imperative. The women who participated in the Daughters of Soul tour are hardheaded dreamers who are also professional musicians with backgrounds and experience in bringing musical ideas to fruition and earning a living in the process. Their actions represent a dialectic of dreaming and doing that is encapsulated in Antonio Gramsci’s aphorism: “pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.”

My impulse to think about the work of these performing artists in light of Gramsci (1971) follows from the fact that for St. Victor and many cultural producers the processes of dreaming extend beyond thinking about professional and aesthetic possibilities into the realm of cultural politics, that is, “the processes through which relations of power are asserted, accepted, contested, or subverted by means of ideas, values, symbols and daily practices” (Glick Schiller 1997: 2). This is because in order to implement the creative projects they imagine, artists who do not fit into the public spaces and creative landscape in which they hope to perform have to alter them so they can participate in them. Artists in this position are by necessity challenging the dominant ideologies in which potential gatekeepers and audiences are invested. Elsewhere, I have noted that increasingly anthropologists are paying attention to these processes, viewing the media and popular culture forms that these cultural producers create as “anthropologically significant sites of the production and transformation of culture” (Mahon 2000: 469). This shift emerges out of a slowly growing willingness to see media and popular culture as worthy of serious scholarly attention throughout the academy. It may also stem from recognition that the viability of achieving change through more traditional modes of political activity like electoral politics and social policy initiatives has been severely restricted in a period of neoliberal reform and that some social struggles and political expressions occur in part through the production of media and popular culture.

Challenging dominant ideologies and practices has been imperative for contemporary black American rock musicians who operate in a context dominated by limited notions of appropriate black cultural expression. Although some exceptional black rockers like Jimi Hendrix, Tina Turner, Prince, Lenny Kravitz, and Living Colour have enjoyed mainstream success, most have found that the racialized political economy of the recording industry makes it difficult, if not impossible, to produce and disseminate their music. In particular, the commonly held idea that black artists and audiences have no interest in or attachment to rock has shaped their professional prospects.

During the 1990s, I researched the black rock scene in New York and Los Angeles, working with musicians who were members of the Black Rock Coalition (BRC), an organization formed in 1985 to support African American rockers and draw attention to the racism of the recording industry (Mahon 2004). They were also concerned with challenging the pervasive thinking that saw their investment in rock as a rejection of blackness. This was the case because over time rock, a form originated by black Americans in the 1940s and 1950s, had become associated with white Americans and, in terms of performers, with white men.

The black rockers who participated in the BRC had come of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period of desegregation and important advances for African Americans in terms of increased acquisition of college education, white-collar employment, and homeownership—the usual markers of middle-class status in the United States. By the mid-1980s, the heart of the Reagan era, they were watching the erosion of and attack on civil rights era gains. Mainstream political discourse and media representation ceased to approach race and racism as structural issues that public policy should address. At the same time, BRC members were trying to break into a recording industry that operated with rigid ideas about appropriate and marketable black musical productions. Furthermore, these private companies were not subject to civil rights legislation ensuring equal employment opportunities (NAACP 1987). With few formal ways to press for inclusion in the industry, BRC members sought to raise consciousness about the racism of the music industry and the historic contribution of black artists to rock ‘n’ roll. The new organization also worked to create a visible community of listeners and performers—by sponsoring concerts in New York and later in Los Angeles—in order to demonstrate the vitality and viability of black rock. Along with founding BRC band Living Colour, Sandra St. Victor’s band the Family Stand was one of the handful of black rock groups that secured a major label recording contract during this period. As a veteran professional musician and as someone who participated in the BRC’s cultural activism, St. Victor was, by the turn of the millennium, well versed in the vicissitudes of the music industry. She knew, for example, that it would make sense to create her own opportunity to perform rather than wait for something to happen. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the strategies St. Victor used to mount the show and consider some of the consequences of her efforts.

Strategies of Naming: Selling Soul

Using the connections I had developed with black rock musicians in New York, I was able to get in contact with Sandra St. Victor whom I did not know before starting this project. We communicated by e-mail and phone before the start of the tour. We talked about the conceptualization of the show, an

idea she had been toying with since moving to Amsterdam in 2002. She had long thought it would be an ideal musical and performing experience to bring together a grouping of black women vocalists whose work she admired—some whom she knew and wanted to work with, others whom she had not met but hoped to work with. In organizing the tour, she was responding to two fears that often motivate action: she worried that if she didn't put the show together, no one else would and it would never happen. And, she worried that if she didn't do it, someone else would—and would get the credit.

St. Victor was conscious of stepping outside her usual role as an artist to be a tour organizer and promoter. All professional musicians must, at some level, think of their careers as a business they are running, but business became the centerpiece for St. Victor since she was the person selling the Daughters of Soul tour to European jazz festivals. Working with a Dutch colleague, Cees Gog, who had experience with the business side of festivals, she focused on logistics like budgets, schedules, marketing, promotion, hiring musicians, payroll, and road management that she did not engage with when she focused on being a singer on stage. She also had to find a way to package her idea so that it would appeal to festival programmers. From a marketing perspective, simply assembling six artists would not be as effective or interesting as creating a story that connected the performers.

The women of the Daughters of Soul tour represent a range of musical styles—R&B, rock, disco, funk, even a little jazz, but St. Victor found that she could forge a viable link by using the term “soul” and recasting it to fit her aesthetic vision. “Soul” allowed her to work within a genre that was recognizable as black and into which it was easy to fit black women. Soul music came into its own in the 1960s on labels like Atlantic and Stax and is associated with artists like Aretha Franklin (“The Queen of Soul”) and Otis Redding. With its uncompromising assertion of an aesthetic rooted in black American religious and secular traditions, fans and critics have tended to view soul music as a particularly authentic form of black musical expression. By the late 1960s, the term “soul” bled outside of the realm of music and became a way to invoke blackness in a positive, self-determining way. The terms “soul brother” and “soul sister” came into use and “having soul” described the possession of valued attributes of blackness. Putting the tour together in late 2003, St. Victor was also exploiting the fact that soul had returned to prominence with the neo-soul movement of black musicians in their twenties reaching back to traditions of the early 1970s and infusing them with some millennial energy. Although she might have called the tour “Soul Sisters,” using the term “daughters” and including the children of well-known soul singers was a way to concretize the performers' connection to the genre of soul and to each other. The tour would present the spiritual and biological “daughters of soul.”

When we spoke, St. Victor observed, “there's the question of what makes something soul music. For me it's a true and pure expression. It doesn't have

to have the blues chords, the R&B sound. Soul is about expressing from the soul. And Nona and Joyce, when they sing, they express *so raw*. That’s the soul. Everything they do. So even when they rock, the soul is there. . . . Soul is the spirit of the performance, the depth of the performance, the artist’s connection with the music and the message.” The artists on the tour were connected, St. Victor stressed to me, by a commitment to a certain type of embodiment and performativity that she labeled “soul.” At the beginning of each of the performances in Europe, St. Victor prefaced her introduction of the artists with a commentary on what soul meant to her in the context of the tour. Soul was a commitment to deeply felt expression. It was something you could find in art that ranged from rock to Rembrandt, she would announce. Significantly, St. Victor was reclaiming and reframing soul to encompass hard-rocking artists like Nona Hendryx and Joyce Kennedy who would probably not fit a standard musicological definition of soul. These two artists had been working in rock and heavy metal contexts that rigid U.S. genre and marketing construct as white and male. For St. Victor, however, the power, persuasiveness, and excitement of their performance styles were crucial to her musical vision for the tour. She was less concerned with the strictures of musical genre than with the expressive capabilities of the women she had recruited to the tour. She respected their artistry and believed Kennedy and Hendryx would be assets to the show. Dividing and defining the artists by genre was not a preoccupation of hers, but she reasoned that for the purposes of selling the tour to European festival booking agents and marketing the festival to audiences, she would have to be strategic in the way she represented her vision. Thus, she chose to both use and rearticulate “soul” for the purposes of selling and explaining the musical production she was creating.

Strategies of Location: Choosing Europe

I am not sure that it was necessary for St. Victor to do the work of redefining soul to promote the tour to European jazz festival organizers. Many African American musicians view Europe as an ideal working environment because the people booking its music venues and festivals tend to have a more open-minded approach to African American music than their equivalents in the United States. Indeed, there is a long history of black American musicians and other artists going to Europe for either brief or extended stays. There, especially in France, they found greater artistic freedom and far less restrictive racism than was typical in the United States (Stovall 1996). While long-term moves to Europe have become rare since the 1960s, many post–civil rights era black musicians maintain an interest in Europe and Japan because these are regions where they find appreciative audiences and dependable, well-paying opportunities to perform for them with more consistency than in the United States. This is especially true for musicians whose work is more experimental

or otherwise less tied to the conventional black music genres that dominate in the United States.

The programming philosophy that apparently informs the decision making at the European jazz festivals may seem unusual to people accustomed to the rigid genre-based approach common in the United States where hard and fast lines between rock, R&B, blues, and jazz and divisions between black and white performers determine programming of concerts and radio stations. The European jazz festivals follow the rules of a local market where “black music” is synonymous with a high quality of musicianship and performance. Whether it is rock, fusion, straight ahead jazz, R&B, or blues is less significant than the racial identity and musical abilities of the performer. Based on my reading of the event programs, I started to think that the European jazz festivals might be more accurately defined as “festivals of music played by black people.” The Nice Jazz Festival hosted jazz vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater, opera singer Jessye Norman, disco band Chic, jazz and R&B trumpeter Roy Hargrove, Nigerian Afro-beat artist Femi Kuti, and the Daughters of Soul. There were also artists of European descent who were closely identified with black music genres: “blue-eyed soul” artist Steve Winwood and singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones played the festival in Spain. Here, the connective tissue was not a strict musical genre, but musical blackness—rather broadly defined—and the willingness to embrace a range of styles.

Still, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that European jazz festivals are also operating from racialized perspectives and that Europe is far from being free from racism. Western European populations have been exhibiting anxiety about the presence of immigrants of non-European descent since they began arriving in large numbers following World War II. The nationwide riots in France in late 2005 are a recent and high-profile manifestation of racial and ethnic divides on the continent. For black American musicians, however, racially essentialist ideas about black people and music have worked to their professional advantage in ways that U.S. stereotypes usually do not. In Europe, they are lauded as musical geniuses uniquely able to deliver aesthetically and emotionally pleasing musical sounds. In the United States, they are confined to a limited range of musical genres. Overall, Europe offers a more hospitable economic and artistic climate for black American musicians and many black musicians depend on Europe for performance opportunities that guarantee decent pay. Black artists might criticize the beneficent racism that tends to treat black people as exotic bearers of compelling creativity, but to eradicate these views could undercut a significant revenue stream.

For St. Victor (and I suspect for many black American musicians) the European option, however financially rewarding, is still a compromise. Indeed, in a certain sense it is a response to a rejection. The United States, after all, is the economic center of the popular music industry and working outside of it is a step down, a second choice. When planning the Daughters of Soul, St. Victor

was unable to convince the U.S. venues she contacted of the viability of her tour and was unable to get economic support for it. Starting in Europe where she was able to develop interest—even to the point of convincing a Dutch television station to film a documentary of the tour—her goal was to lay the groundwork for future performances in the United States, the home country of all of the Daughters of Soul. To this end St. Victor launched a Web page (www.daughtersofsoul.com) that provides background about the tour and contact information for booking the show.

Strategies of Performance: Negotiating Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Although they had different stylistic approaches to the material and different vocal qualities and ranges, each of the six Daughters of Soul had formidable vocal chops. The concert was structured to showcase each singer as a soloist and also in duet, a choice that gave each participant room to shine on her own while also allowing exchange between singers. The songs were a mix of tunes associated with the artists on the tour, songs associated with the “parents of soul” being honored on the tour, and soul hits from the past and present that St. Victor thought would work well for the singers and the show. Lalah Hathaway, for example, opened her set with “Brown Skin,” a recent hit by neo-soul artist India.Arie, then followed up with the older mid-’70s hit “Street Life” and then her father’s popular “Little Ghetto Boy.” St. Victor also arranged duets that paired the biological and spiritual daughters; these were especially strong moments as the women played off of one another’s energies. The show also featured two production numbers, “Four Women” and “Lady Marmalade,” moments when there were more than two vocalists on stage. I discuss these two set pieces because in their image, sound, content, and execution, they crystallize some of the race, gender, and sexuality negotiations the Daughters of Soul performers made as they sought to express and enact their desires as performers while also entertaining an audience.

In Nice, halfway through the set, Lisa Simone prepared the audience for the next song, speaking over a quiet bass and drum beat that started playing as the applause for her previous number dwindled. “I’m going to take you back. This is a song by my mother Nina Simone.” A swell of applause greeted the familiar name. Lisa hummed along with the brooding bass then continued. “In the 1960s, the United States was going through a rough time. Maybe you recognize this bass line,” she said. “She wrote this song a long time ago, during a time of struggle between white and black people in America. Most of us who are brown or yellow or light brown are a mix of different things. This song represents women from four different walks of life.” She paused and started to sing the first verse of her mother’s “Four Women,” a song of four deft, first-person portraits of everyday black women. On the 1965 recording, Nina Simone sang all four verses, each of which concludes with the statement

of the woman's name. On the tour, St. Victor assigned a verse to each of four singers—Simone, Kennedy, Hendryx, and herself—and staged the number so each woman made an entrance and sang her story. Each verse describes the woman's physical appearance, indicates her personality, and announces her name. A woman named Aunt Sarah speaks of her black skin and the strength that allows her to tolerate the pain that has been inflicted on her. A light-skinned, long-haired woman name Siffronia talks about living between two worlds because of her features and the fact that her father was a rich white man who raped her mother. The third woman says that she is known as Sweet Thing; she describes her inviting figure and asks, "Whose little girl am I? Anyone who has money to buy." The last woman introduced in the song describes herself as a tough and bitter person who has lived a rough life and is now out of patience "because my parents were slaves."

For Simone aficionados, the song's last line, "My name is Peaches," spoken by the fourth woman and sung by all four Daughters of Soul in harmony, is well known as a black woman's defiant assertion of her refusal to be trampled on. Talented, original, iconoclastic, Nina Simone, known as the High Priestess of Soul, gave voice to the experiences of contemporary black people in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout her career, she occupied an iconic status for black American audiences, women in particular. Inspired by the civil rights movement, Simone intertwined personal and political preoccupations in songs like "Mississippi Goddam" and "To Be Young, Gifted and Black." She could just as easily sing a love song like "Wild Is the Wind" as a protofeminist declaration like "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood."¹ "Four Women" gives voice to black women who might otherwise be invisible, unheard, or misrecognized. The portraits do not depict superwomen, positive role models, or simplistic stereotypes; instead, they peel back a layer as each woman speaks for herself about her personality and position. In rendering these portraits, Nina Simone confronted some of the most sensitive issues in black American communities: the politics of gender and skin color. Commenting on the song in her autobiography, Simone explained, "The women in the song are black, but their skin tones range from light to dark and their ideas of beauty and their own importance are deeply influenced by that. All the song did was to tell what entered the minds of most black women in America when they thought about themselves: Their complexions, their hair—straight, kinky, natural, which?—and what other women thought of them. Black women didn't know what the hell they wanted because they were defined by things they didn't control, and until they had the confidence to define themselves they'd be stuck in the same mess forever—that was the point the song made" (Simone 1991: 117). Part of the power of "Four Women" comes from the direct way Simone documented a condition. There is no glossing over of black difference or overstatement of black unity or positive black consciousness. She drew from her experiences and those of other black women to express and expose some of what it means

to be a black woman. It was, of course, a deeply political move for Nina Simone to perform a song like this in the thick of a black political movement that, as many black feminists have observed, submerged the concerns of black women and discussions of sexism in order to focus on what were constructed as the more immediate needs of the community (Combahee River Collective 1995; A. Y. Davis 1983; hooks 1981). Reflecting on her choices, Nina Simone said, "along with everything else there had to be changes in the way we [black women] saw ourselves and in how men saw us" (Simone 1991: 117). Forty years after its release, "Four Women" remains a moving piece precisely because it addresses issues that black women continue to struggle with. As Nina Simone put it, "I didn't wake up one morning feeling dissatisfied. These feelings just became more and more intense, until by the time the sixties ended I'd look in the mirror and see two faces, knowing that on the one hand I loved being black and being a woman, and that on the other it was my colour and sex which had fucked me up in the first place" (Simone 1991: 118). The inclusion of "Four Women" in the set allowed the tour to pay homage to a black woman artist whose work was significant to the performers on stage while also articulating something about black women and black femininity that went beyond the usual images available in mainstream popular culture.

"Four Women" stood out as a serious song in the midst of the soulful, rocking fun and playfulness that led a reviewer from the French newspaper *Le Figaro* to describe the show as "sexy, vulgar but fun" (*un concert sexy, vulgaire mais rigolo*) (Koechlin 2004). The question of how to present oneself on stage is always an issue for performing artists. For black women, discussing and representing one's sexuality is particularly vexed. Black feminist scholars have observed that over time, black women developed a culture of silence about their sexuality in response to a long history of being characterized as sexually aberrant: overly sexual, improperly feminine, or completely asexual (A. Y. Davis 1983; Hine 1995; Morton 1991).² This has made black women wary of speaking about sexuality, sexual pleasure, and sexual desire for fear of reinscribing dominant stereotypes. As a result, "black women's complex sexual lives are caught between a racial/sexual mainstream cultural rock and a counternarrative hard place" (T. Rose 2003: 395; cf. Hammonds 1994). Significantly, some black, predominantly working-class women broke these silences by producing widely circulated public discourses about sexuality and other women's concerns through their participation in blues music (Carby 1999; A. Y. Davis 1998; D. D. Harrison 1990) in the 1920s and, more recently, in contemporary rap (T. Rose 1994). "Lady Marmalade," the only song in the set in which all six Daughters of Soul sang together, is about the sexual power of a black woman. Performed on the Daughters of Soul tour, it reveals some of the challenges associated with staging black women's sexuality.

In some ways, it would have been impossible *not* to include "Lady Marmalade." It was the biggest hit of funky black rock divas Labelle, of which tour

Daughter Nona Hendryx was a founding member. Furthermore, the song had been reintroduced to mainstream radio and video through director Baz Luhrmann's 2001 film *Moulin Rouge*, a musical whose soundtrack included a remake featuring young, popular, and sexy female vocalists—Lil' Kim, Christina Aguilera, Pink, and Mya. In the summer of 2001 it was number one on *Billboard's* Hot 100. For Labelle, it had been a Hot 100 number one in 1975. A familiar song, it also provided an opportunity for vocal pyrotechnics. "Lady Marmalade" then, was an opportunity for all six daughters to strut their stuff vocally and, as it turned out, otherwise. In contrast to the sobriety of "Four Women," "Lady Marmalade" is an upbeat, infectious romp in which, in a time-honored American tradition, something "dirty" is rendered in French: the song's famous chorus is the proposition "Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir?" (Do you want to sleep with me tonight?) The song tells the story of a *café au lait* colored streetwalker whose beauty and sexual prowess are so great that at least one of the men who pays her for sex, Joe, cannot get her out of his mind. Written by Bob Crewe and Kenny Nolan, "Lady Marmalade" is a brilliant pop song that also contains a familiar, potentially reductive depiction of a black woman. (Ironically, it presents an image that is also part of Simone's "Four Women," via the character Sweet Thing.)

St. Victor opened the number by chanting, "Soul Sisters! Soul Sisters! Where's all my Soul Sisters?" calling the Daughters of Soul to the stage. Together, the six launched into the "Hey, Sister! Go, Sister!" refrain that starts the song. The performance was focused on playful teasing; indeed, a whole lot of "shaking it" was going on as the Daughters of Soul strolled and strutted their way through a crowd-pleasing rendition of the hit. Hendryx, Kennedy, and Khan traded off verses. Khan slid onto her knees like an old-style soul man, clasped the microphone, and leaned forward to sing about Creole Lady Marmalade. Hathaway grabbed a cowbell to provide percussive accents and then, coordinating with Simone and Hendryx, executed some backup singer moves. The performance was a raucous and funky way to conclude the show.

As a fan I enjoyed the spectacle of the "Lady Marmalade" performance, but as a critic, I found myself struggling to interpret this pleasurable unruly performance. At one level, I see the display of sexiness as a fallback to what audiences expect from women on stage, especially black women. In fact, I should note that in Nice, the crowd was so delighted that by the end of the song, many audience members were standing on their chairs shouting "Encore!" At another level, I see "Lady Marmalade" as a celebration that neither erases nor apologizes for a black woman's sexuality, a confrontational move in the contemporary context. As performed by Labelle, the *Moulin Rouge* soundtrack artists, and the Daughters of Soul, it is also a statement and enactment of (soul) sisterhood as women exuberantly sing together, praising another woman.³ Inevitably, "Lady Marmalade" and some of the Daughters' song choices and onstage practices raise fraught questions about how to interpret

black women's use of sexuality in performance. Are they objectifying themselves or exercising agency through self-definition? Are they asserting control over their image? Or are they capitulating to expectations of how women on stage should display their bodies? If they are doing all of these things at once, does one action take precedence?

Some of the songs performed on the Daughters of Soul tour allowed black women to speak in forthright terms about sex. Given the probable language gap—the performers sang in English to French- and Spanish-speaking audiences at the performances I saw—the lyrical content was arguably less important than costume, bodily movement, and the sound of the voice in conveying images of black women. Here, a range of styles was at play and the variety was notable. St. Victor and Lalah Hathaway kept their bodies well covered in loose-fitting dresses and were reserved in their dancing. Lisa Simone wore a close fitting jumpsuit and paced the stage confidently, dancing with tasteful hip shakes during instrumental segments of her numbers. Blonde-haired Joyce Kennedy dressed like a rocker in black leather and white lace. Kennedy's vocals and those of Nona Hendryx, like most rock vocals, were rooted in R&B, but the guitar-centered instrumentation, the volume, and the kinetic energy of their performances put them into the rock camp where black women are not expected to be. There was also the subversive sexual energy brought by Hendryx, who wore a tight leather miniskirt and bustier and commanded everyone in the audience to "sweat with me" at one point in her set. Indira Khan took a page from her mother's book and dressed to accentuate her considerable cleavage and, balancing in her high-heeled, thigh-high boots, leaned forward—a lot. There was pleasure and pleasure-in-impropriety (in contrast to black middle-class respectability) at work in these sexually playful performances and their refusal to follow middle-class mores. Still, cultural critic Tricia Rose's comment about sexuality in women's rap is meaningful here: "For some, their sexual freedom could be considered dangerously close to self-inflicted exploitation" (1994: 168). As I developed my analysis, I noted my own strategic shifts from sympathetic readings that embraced the liberating agency of the show to more critical readings that wearied at the tour's recapitulation of stereotypes. Where I stood depended on the point I wanted to make. I found that to document and interpret the actions of the Daughters of Soul, I was contending with many of the same negotiations around gender, race, sexuality, and location that the artists must have confronted, as well as my own hopes and expectations for the show. My discussion of the ambiguous nature of sexuality in black women's performance and the extent to which a European location opened up possibilities for these performers is, like the performance itself, a product of neoliberalism's peculiar openings for expression and the limits that are inevitable in neoliberal states where structural inequalities persist.

The Daughters of Soul performers both played with and played against ex-

pectations, seeking to express their creative vision, but often operating within familiar paradigms in order to secure a platform and garner an audience. St. Victor and her business partner Cees Gog felt the tour had succeeded in part because they received positive feedback from festival staff members and good critical notices in Nice, Pori, and San Sebastián. At the root of the strategies I have been discussing—and some are perhaps more conscious than others—was the Daughters of Soul performers' interest in accomplishing professional, artistic, personal, and ideological goals. They made strategic shifts to incorporate the familiar images of black female performers even while promoting the less-familiar ones by centering a song like "Four Women" and by including the hard-rocking performances of Kennedy and Hendryx. Indeed, the performers' interest in expanding the possibilities of black women's performance was coupled with a desire for visibility and acceptance in mainstream arenas. This is a familiar position for artists: they are invested in their difference and also interested in achieving some level of inclusion, albeit inclusion on more amenable terms. St. Victor designed the tour to address the particular limits faced by black women vocalists and to carve a space for the kind of musical performance that mattered to her and her sister performers. She manipulated discourses, drew on a historical legacy, mixed music genres, and identified a performance context that she correctly anticipated would be open to her work and—and this is important—willing to pay for it. St. Victor's efforts to produce the Daughters of Soul responded to the economic, career, aesthetic, and ideological imperatives of black women artists. In using the Daughters of Soul show as an opportunity to perform and gain visibility, the artists were exercising their agency within a restrictive set of structures—those of the U.S. recording industry as well as the more general race, gender, and class constraints of mainstream U.S. culture.

This situation reveals, as Kondo suggests, that anthropologists need to reconsider "conventional categories such as resistance or accommodation, opposition or sell-out" (Kondo 1997: 150). In order to survive in their chosen field, cultural producers operate well beyond these clear-cut binaries. As an ethnographer, I have found it productive to also move beyond binaries and focus instead on the belief these cultural producers have in "what might be" and the practices they enact to achieve their goals. At the same time, of course, it is necessary to attend to the internal and external forces that shape their choices. Finally, this project reminded me of the importance of acknowledging that, as an ethnographer, I was operating within and implicated in the very systems of representation, consumption, resistance, and accommodation that I was analyzing and, consequently, needed to be aware of the ways that my own investments shaped the ways I approached and interpreted the material at hand.

Chapter 14

Rags to Riches

Religion, Media, and the Performance of Wealth in a Neoliberal Age

MARLA FREDERICK

Minister Leslie's story is perhaps unexpected but not necessarily unusual for Halifax County, a rural northeastern region of North Carolina. Near the border of Virginia, this is the next-to-last stop in the Carolinas for travelers heading north on Interstate 95. Historically dominated by agriculture, the economy of the region today is driven more or less by neoliberal processes that draw upon manufacturing industries (textiles, poultry, and meatpacking plants) and government contributions to public sector infrastructure (Holland et al. 2007). With a population of around 57,000, the county has about 52.6 percent of inhabitants who identify as African American, 42.6 percent as white, 3.1 percent as American Indian, 1 percent Latin American, and 0.5 percent Asian American.¹

Some folks break out of the routine of factory work or service labor and venture to form their own businesses. Restaurants, mobile home dealerships, craft stores, and flower shops are markers of the entrepreneurial spirit that emboldens these residents. While local white residents with age-old roots in Halifax form the majority of its entrepreneurial class, small numbers of African Americans, generally tied to middle-class standing by employment in the school system or other public sector jobs, are developing small operations in the county. Minister Leslie is among this group, her beauty salon representing a common vehicle for entrepreneurship among women.

Early one morning, we met in her salon. As I gathered my notes and set the recorder, she adjusted the lights and prepared for the day's clients. She walked around the shop, responding in kind to the questions that I posed. Most of her responses were routine—she loved the Lord, enjoyed religious television, and believed that God was blessing her—but then she let me in on a “secret.” “God is going to make me a millionaire.” According to her, God instructed her to purchase a new suit every week for church in order to literally by faith “walk in” her financial increase—her articulation and performance of wealth demonstrating her faith even as she waits for it.

Minister Leslie's testimony reflects the logic of prosperity that dominates much of religious television. The primary focus of the "prosperity gospel" is on financial abundance and medical health, along with the added benefits of spiritual and familial enrichment. This type of programming consumes much of the airtime on leading religious networks like TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network), CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network), INSP (The Inspirational Network) and the Word Network. Taking root in the mid-1900s as a challenge to the idea that Christians should live humbly and suffer joyously, prosperity advocates propose a theology that encourages Christians to experience life in its abundance while here on earth rather than wait for a promised afterlife. Today, prosperous living based on a belief in the rightful inheritance of Christians to wealth is the subject of numerous sermons, interviews, and testimonies presented on the networks. "Name it and claim it" or "Fake it 'til you make it" theologies abound and are on the extreme end of theologies that promise financial blessings to believers. Other more pragmatic approaches to wealth, (debt-free living, planning for retirement, home buying) are all factors in the new discourse defining the "blessed" and "highly favored" class. While there are diverse denominational and nondenominational iterations of a prosperity gospel, the latter half of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first century have witnessed a dramatic rise in the numbers of ministries linking religious ideology with rising capital (M. F. Harrison 2005).

By performing wealth, religious leaders perform a type of Horatio Alger success story through their sometimes subtle, yet often flamboyant, articulation of wealth that celebrates the spiritual value of material abundance. The distribution of these images comes at a particular moment in history marked by advances in technology and the expansion of neoliberal ideologies that encourage the spread of American corporations and capital in greater, more precarious communities around the world. Such ideologies, committed to market freedom, wed capital accumulation and individual initiative, while eschewing government intervention that might more readily regulate industry standards and the distribution of profits.

The intersection of religion and media at the crossroads of neoliberalism requires scholars to consider the layers of meaning created through the representation of religious messages on television in both palaces and hamlets across the globe. This media-friendly gospel of wealth raises questions about performance, costuming, and makeover. What is the connection between personal transformation and neoliberalism's particular brand of optimism? The contemporary emergence of reality makeover shows, which transform everything from houses to individual bodies in a matter of moments, makes clear the extent to which notions of "makeover" or transformation are guided by expectations of immediacy (often funded by immediate credit). Such calls for instant success require us to ask questions about the impact of economic liberalism on individuals' religious imagination.

In this chapter I argue that through multiple and varied performances of wealth televangelists provide adherents with a means for imagining upward mobility that offers hope for success within the capitalist mainstream. The chapter has three sections: the first, on evangelists' performance of personal style; the second, on narratives of blessings; and the third, on conservative political discourses. In each case, I also attend to women's responses to these aspects of the evangelists' message, based on my fieldwork in Halifax. Against the odds of attaining exceptional wealth in this rural southern economy (struggling against economic downturns which have sent much needed jobs overseas through free trade agreements like NAFTA), women reformulate their notions of wealth and class based upon the idea of being "blessed and highly favored"—a religious mantra that uncouples material wealth from materialism. Their membership in the "blessed and highly favored" class is marked by their acquisition of a "spiritual capital" grounded as much in faith values as it is social and economic values. While for Max Weber the drive for greater accomplishments and material possessions becomes the "iron cage" of the spirit, I contend that women's own interpretive frameworks at times support this hypothesis but also, more often than not, belie any notion of them as strict materialists. Ongoing discussions on the meaning of prosperity among women reveal that any strict pursuit of monetary gain is tempered by a need to hold the pursuit of things and the pursuit of God in balance. The confounding power of religious television and the message of prosperity is that it reaches into communities and contexts that may or may not have the structural landscape to support individualist claims to abundance.

Performing Class in Religious Television

TELEVANGELISTS' STYLE AND PRESENTATION

As modern-day Horatio Algers, contemporary religious leaders have built a market around the distribution of countless books, CDs, and DVDs. Through these "ministry tools" evangelists perform a type of upper-class status that reflects their acquisition of the American dream while teaching their audiences how they too can attain it. Theoretical ideas such as performance, performativity, dandyism, pastiche, and drag (Butler 1999; Garber 1992; Fillin-Yeh 2001; and Jameson 1991) give entrée into interpreting the layers of meaning present in televangelists' and adherents' attempts at navigating various class boundaries.

Contemporary theories that rely on notions of performance underscore the tenuousness and fluidity of the subject. For example, "dandyism," an expression used to convey the ways in which historic figures perform class and social mobility through dress, reveals the way in which these personalities are "'betwixt and between' clearly defined social statuses and spaces" (Fillin-Yeh

2001: 5). By focusing on ministers' speech and attire I highlight the ambiguity present in the performance of class-based notions of faith and delineate the layers of performance evidenced in both the preaching of the gospel of wealth by television ministers and its reception and appropriation by the viewing audience.

With perfectly cropped hair, immaculately tailored suits, expensive jewelry, and well-manicured nails, media evangelists perform the quintessential success story. Their stages, particularly on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) of Paul and Jan Crouch, are adorned in purple and gold (colors of royalty) and arrayed with vaulted chairs in order to signify prosperity. This presentation of wealth bolsters the call toward upward mobility for true believers. While televangelists often come from different theological backgrounds, the concluding message often resonates with a call for social class advancement. They vary in their expressions of class, as well as in the degree to which they propose that one's spiritual pursuit should be part and parcel of a quest toward material abundance. Nevertheless, most often the more popular evangelists are those who espouse ongoing financial abundance.

Their testimonies of material success and the proliferation of these types of testimonies on religious television, however, do not emerge in a vacuum. Instead, they reflect the change in both the nature of Pentecostalism and the history of religious broadcasting over the past forty years. In 1960 the Federal Communications Commission decided to end the distinction between sustaining-time and paid-time religious broadcasting. Prior to this decision much of religious television was dominated by wealthy, established denominational structures like mainline Protestant churches and Catholic churches. In the years following the transition to exclusively paid-time programming neo-Pentecostal and evangelical leaders came to dominate the market (Voskuil 1990). The convergence of these two forms, religious media and Pentecostalism, took shape, some scholars argue, because of the demands of the market. In order to support themselves on television under the paid-time system, religious broadcasters needed a valuable product to sell. Testimonies about the abundant life and images of the abundant life resonated with millions in the viewing audience. Pentecostal, Word of Faith, and charismatic communities with their commitments to personal transformation along with their *flair for the dramatic* provided just the product to bring in large numbers of supporters/consumers. Shaken from its earlier roots placing spiritual value on simplicity and poverty, some forms of Pentecostalism had already begun to remake themselves with the theology of prosperity around the midcentury. Religious broadcasting simply worked to seal their commitments. Preachers like Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and Oral Roberts began preaching a gospel that promised not only salvation, but health and wealth for the true believers in this present age. This neo-Pentecostal trend has taken center stage on most religious programming. Interestingly, the increase in these narratives runs

simultaneously with the growth of the self-help industry and an increased dependency upon the market by government as well as the private sector.

The presentation of wealth presented by televangelists often comes packaged in forms from the gaudy and outrageous to the calm, sophisticated dress of Wall Street. While earlier performances of wealth by televangelists often bordered on the bright suits and flamboyant hairstyles of less refined tastes, recent images of televangelists tend to falter on the high end of fashion. Given the historic stigma that religious television caters to backward, uneducated communities (Schultze 1991), new religious symbols take on often dramatically different representations.

Their style of dress is matched by their bodily appearance. As attire sells, so does the physical appearance of a minister. Media personalities—even ministers—must be made up. According to sociologist Shayne Lee (2005: 71), “In 1997 [televangelist T. D.] Jakes celebrated his fortieth birthday by purchasing a new blue convertible BMW. Deciding he was too valuable a marketing commodity to remain plump, Jakes shed almost a hundred pounds to match his new flamboyant attire.” The overweight Jakes reflected lower-class, nonmainstream standing, while the trimmer Jakes commanded middle-class respectability. Similarly Joyce Meyers announced to her traveling congregation that she endured a face-lift in order to remain attractive to her audiences, often stating jokingly that her audiences didn’t want to see a “drooping Joyce” walking around on stage. Her desire to enhance her physical appearance through the process of surgery reinforces the need to perform a biblically sanctioned type of middle-class image in order to remain appealing to the mainstream market.

Televangelists also enhance their titles as a means of securing prominence and establishing authority among mainstream audiences. Since their initial launch into the throes of televangelism, both Juanita Bynum and Paula White have secured “Ph.D.” as the suffix for their names. Paula White’s broadcast now introduces her as “Dr. Paula White” without an indication of the history of her letters. Similarly, the original cover of Juanita Bynum’s book *Matters of the Heart* recognizes her as “Juanita Bynum, Ph.D.” In this context technology has made it so that online sites like that of Friends International Christian University (www.ficu.edu) offer quick nonaccredited degrees for Christian leaders seeking to boost their education and/or their value in the market.² This presentation by neo-Pentecostals and Word of Faith preachers allows them to transcend the presumed class status of their denominational history. No longer laced by the image of Pentecostalism as a backward and repressive faith, contemporary Pentecostals have appropriated the values of the market as a means of securing their footing in an increasingly global and diverse marketplace.

In this age of media and technology the attainment of educational credentials that establish class distinctions can be acquired with the click of a button.

One does not necessarily have to participate in the traditional educational process. The presentation of religious personalities in televangelism allows religious leaders to perform a type of class distinction that reflects more of the pastiche of postmodern image making. The image of "Dr." presented at the beginning of a telecast establishes for the viewing audience the authority of the minister. The history and substance of these letters is of little consequence.

Similar to the acquisition of the title "Dr.," male (not female) religious personalities have more liberally adopted the title of "Bishop" as their status marker. In this way they not only attain the cultural capital associated with the physical acquisition of wealth, but they also acquire a level of spiritual capital based on the presumption of their more highly advanced level of faith, spiritual discernment, and spiritual gifts. Illiana Quimbaya (2005) argues that in Latin America such titles work to level the playing field among charismatics and the more seminary-trained ministers of the Catholic Church whose ecclesiastic orders are centuries old.

By appropriating various class markers, (e.g., dress, bodily appearance, social titles), televangelists are able to convey to their audiences a type of class status that emanates authority and respect. Their positions and presentations of themselves make them attractive models for emulation. Having recently come to status, televangelists are able to model a form of class mobility that resonates with everyday audiences. For many in the viewing audience, however, televangelists' presentations must strike a balance that does not lean too heavily toward extravagance. Unlike their secular counterparts who may actively advance financial wealth as a virtue, televangelists must temper any notion of material abundance with spiritual acumen. It is a tricky negotiation of presence, yet those in the audience are careful to note what might be perceived as any excessive focus on abundance.

WOMEN WATCHING

Women watching religious television often have complicated relationships with the presentation of wealth and status that is seen on air. While some understand the presentation to be an indication of God's blessing, others wonder about the extravagance of it all. When televangelist Juanita Bynum married in a beautiful, elaborate wedding, videotapes were offered for sale on TBN under the title "Weeks-Bynum: Wedding of the Century."³ While one resident of Halifax County thought the ceremony was "fit for a queen," others critiqued its extravagance and wondered whether the presentation was too heavily laced with material showmanship.

Similar concerns about the lavishness of religious performance were voiced by other Baptist women in my study, their relationship to more modest expressions of faith serving as an indicator for interpreting their reticence. According to Carmen, a community college instructor, "If you flip on the Bible

network right now, on television, there's one right behind the other. . . . Oh, there are elaborate suits and sequins and bouffant hair and rings and diamonds and elaborate edifices and flowers and this and that and I'm just cynical about that. You know. One guy has a big pompadour all over here and rings and Ahhh! That gets in the way to me" (Frederick 2003: 149). Raised in a traditional Baptist church, where she now serves as choir director, Carmen is critical of the seemingly outlandish demonstrations of wealth presented by televangelists. The teaching in her local Baptist church still adheres to centuries-old doctrines about Jesus and his life as a mere carpenter, who went out to minister and had "nowhere to lay his head." It does not expand on narratives of wealth regarding Jesus or individual biblical characters. As much as she conjoins her religious experience of church with that of religious broadcasting, there remains dissonance on questions of faith and material gain.

As church doctrine might explain parts of Carmen's commentary, living in Halifax County might further explain her resistance to any extravagant performance of wealth. In Halifax the contemporary shopping pastime that moves more cosmopolitan consumers, who have access to varieties of malls and boutiques within a thirty-minute radius, is hampered by the sheer absence of such elaborate shopping facilities. When most residents of Halifax choose to enjoy a shopping trip, they plan in advance to drive the hour and a half to Raleigh, North Carolina, or Richmond, Virginia, in order to have access to greater variety. While the local mall has one major department store, the entire mall consists of fewer than twenty stores.

In a similar fashion Sylvia, another of the Baptist women with whom I spoke, suggests that the type of presentation of wealth on religious television is too "far-fetched" for her. "When you have eyelashes on longer than my finger nails, when you have hair four feet tall, and every hair is . . . and the guys, everything is just so perfect and all this glitter. . . . It's just too far-fetched for me . . . it's just too commercial" (Frederick 2003: 148). The sometimes outlandish presentations of wealth by televangelists cause a disconnect with women whose faith traditions and communities may not perform wealth in similar fashion.

The need to juggle these positions is common in the presentation of televangelists. While earlier models rested on the flamboyance of dress style, contemporary evangelists often boast a much more urbane model of class distinction. Jakes has traded in his earlier bright red and purple suits, for a more upscale, tailored look with subtle browns, blacks, and ivories. This transition is not lost on Jakes or his viewing audience. He has joked about his earlier practice of wearing flamboyant colors with suits matching even more colorful shoes. The broadening of his audience has certainly played a role in the performance of class. Those televangelists who have not made the transition to a more contemporary urbane flair tend to hold to older prescriptions, while televangelists

like Juanita Bynum, Paula White, and T. D. Jakes have all stepped into a more classic presentation of American middle-class values.

Narratives of Blessings

TELEVANGELISTS' STORIES

In addition to the physical presentation of wealth through dress and personal style, televangelists' verbal testimonies of eventual success offer validity to the efficacy of the prosperity faith system. To the extent that they are able to certify their successful acquisition of material possessions through their testimonies, they are able to affirm the legitimacy of the process. Other evidence is unnecessary; testimony alone validates the claim.

By articulating their own "rags to riches" stories, contemporary evangelists are able to build a discourse that supports the idea of transcending the societal boundaries placed on the working class or working poor. Bypassing structural critiques of economic injustice, these narratives of blessings are rooted in the agency of the individual to triumph "in spite of," calling both liberation theology and more liberal Protestant notions of social reform into question.

Experiences of race, class, and gender discrimination are most often talked about as individual experiences with pain and not as part and parcel of a larger system of social inequality. The narrative suggests that regardless of race, class, or gender background one can achieve success within the American political economy because of the power of faith and hard work. Although this narrative is not a "color-blind" narrative of social advancement per se for African American evangelists, it is a pragmatic approach to addressing historic inequality that focuses primarily on the efforts of the oppressed. Because of the gendered and raced backgrounds of religious personalities, such narratives of blessing are coterminous with ideas about what it means for poor women and poor people of color in general to come out of poverty. Social theorists argue that individuals' identities cannot be separated out into categories; therefore, when we talk about women, we must also consider how race and class affect their gendered realities.

Among the growing numbers of white female evangelists like Joyce Meyers, Darlene Bishop, and Jan Crouch, Paula White has emerged as a leading neo-Pentecostal evangelist whose testimony serves as the cornerstone of her ministry. Having grown up "trailer trash," as she describes her experience, White's ministry is based on her testimony of overcoming sexual abuse as well as poverty. She connects with her audience based on a shared sense of struggle. "I know what it's like to receive government cheese," she reminds them, as she challenges her viewing audience to overcome their own limiting circumstances. Able to mix notions of both class and gender triumphalism, White's personification of success affirms the transcendent nature of prosperity theology.

Speaking to an audience of predominantly black women at a “Woman Thou Art Loosed” conference, the substance of White’s narrative resonates among women of color, although her preaching style is often racialized.⁴ Women who claim to not consider the race of an evangelist important simultaneously acknowledge that Paula White “preaches like a black woman.” Her rhetorical style, dynamic movement, and energetic exhortation for these women is not marked as an offspring of her Pentecostal background, but as a latent African American cultural trait. Pentecostalism, so long associated with poor African Americans from its founding in America tied to the Azusa Street meetings of 1906, is now widely acknowledged as a practice that has been common among poor people regardless of color.⁵ For Pentecostals then to achieve the level of success that White, Jakes, and Bynum experience is also a triumph of Pentecostalism amidst denominational classism.

Having invited Paula White to preach at the “Woman Thou Art Loosed” conference, exposing her at once to over 50,000 black women worshippers (and consumers) from across the country, T. D. Jakes has helped to catapult White into the national and international spotlight. He has created an alliance with Paula White that allows her to cross racial boundaries on a class ticket.

When considering the wild success of Paula White’s ministry among African American women, many ask what should be made of the fact that a white female minister’s rise to prominence is facilitated by a black male minister? Is this about winning a wider, multiracial market share by Jakes, or is this a show of class solidarity that crosses racial lines? Could this be seen as an amusing take on William Julius Wilson’s *The Declining Significance of Race*—which could have easily been entitled “The Increasing Significance of Class”? Or, might their alliance hark back to the 1906 Azusa Street camp meetings where the power of the Holy Spirit among Pentecostals allowed them to form interracial alliances that transcended the racial barriers erected in traditional mainline denominations.

Currently pastor of a 20,000-plus-member church in Dallas, a celebrated playwright, novelist, and entrepreneur, Jakes himself, since the founding of his “Woman Thou Art Loosed” conferences in 1993 and subsequent “God’s Leading Ladies” conference, has offered women a narrative of blessing aimed at transforming their socioeconomic positions. He speaks often of the poverty of his youth and the struggles he and his wife experienced before his stardom. He explains to them that during his childhood, “Mama didn’t have money to buy you a toy, so you took a stick and a can and made you a toy” (emulating one hitting a baseball) (Jakes n.d.). As an adult, Jakes, often negotiating between preaching, ditch digging, and working at a local West Virginia chemical plant, struggled alongside his wife and four children to make ends meet. For him the theology of prosperity demonstrates that both race and class limitations can be transcended by strict belief in the authority of scripture and the application of moral principles like hard work, honesty, and commitment.

For Jakes the performance of success through narratives of uplift presume the immediate efficacy of individual agency in transforming a situation. As a black male evangelist, whose life has been burdened by the history of American racism, he is able to point to his success as evidence of the power of faith. In this way his performance of class mobility demonstrates the agency referenced in performance theory. The ability to narrate on stage an oppositional discourse that demonstrates triumph over prescribed circumstances of failure conveys to the viewing audience a measure of agency atypical of the narrative's circumstances. "You should have gone crazy," he reminds his all-female audience, "anybody been through what you've been through" [Jakes n.d.]. Nevertheless, their mere survival, for Jakes, demonstrates a form of agency renewed by their acts of faith. Yet, there is a difference between survival and upward mobility. To the extent that women in the listening audience are surviving but have not fully acquired greater social positioning speaks to the possible limits of this transference of class mobility. For African American women in the listening audience to perform subjective middle-class positioning—affirming those ideas of class not "exclusively tied to hard and fast economic charts"—while awaiting the increased fruits of objective class standing—those measurable markers of wealth such as "income, education, occupation, residency, social networks, wealth, and so on"—speaks to the limits and hopes placed in the performance of faith by adherents (Jackson 2001: 128). African American women evangelists who personify the success of faith communicate in their bodies the individual's ability to overcome the challenges of race, class, and gender.

Just as one might be prone to perceive that "all blacks are men" and "all the women are white" as the anthology by black feminist scholars suggests (Hull, Scott, and Smith 1982), the testimonies of women like Juanita Bynum demonstrate the quintessential success story. A woman challenged by the peculiarities of race, class, *and* gender marginalization is able to profess the power of prosperity discourse. During her 1996 address to one of Jakes's singles' conferences, Bynum preached a sermon entitled "No More Sheets" (a metaphor for premarital sexual relationships), about the consequences of disobedience and the rewards of obedience in the Christian life. Her personal testimony reflects the trials of a woman too long ensconced in an abusive relationship with a man out of financial necessity. He covered her rent, purchased her furnishings, and bought her clothing. Bynum's testimony reinforces the power of faith not only to leave troubled relationships, but also to achieve financial abundance. Throughout the final moments of her message, she challenged those present to give financially to the ministry so that they could experience the rewards of financial blessings. "With the promise of Gucci shoes and Versace bags, Bynum commanded those gathered to give expeditiously. 'Run, you want a blessing? You better run! Don't walk. Run!'" (Frederick 2003: 161). That she could wear Gucci and Versace paraphernalia symbolized her ability

to transcend the boundaries of limited class status through the sheer power of faith. For those watching, the embodied performance of a poor black woman narrating the avenue to success conveys the potential present in others if they too would exercise faith—in this instance by giving. In this way evangelists like Jakes, Bynum, and White situate their narratives within a larger framework of American class struggle.

Televangelists' personal narratives of Horatio Alger-like success, built primarily on their rise in popularity as media stars in the growing religious market, traverse back and forth between the poverty and isolation of their youth to the financial abundance of their adulthood. They are forever fluid, never settled comfortably into the ease of their upper-middle-class lifestyle. Instead, like revivalists of old who constantly wavered between the sin of their past and their transformation in Christ reminding the sinner of the road to heaven, contemporary evangelists vacillate between their lives of poverty and abundance in order to offer hope to those yet in the liminal space between lack and blessing. They are never fixed as strict materialists nor are they confined as performers without agency. They are both ambiguous and agent. Yet, their agency and fluidity is only variably replicable in the lives of their viewing audiences. Within this genre of preaching at a moment of neoliberal restructuring, not only are personal narratives for sale within the market of religious commodities, but they serve as the bedrock of hope for those individuals trying to come through similar circumstances of race, class, or gender marginalization. In large measure hope garnered in these narratives of blessings replaces the hope once found in government and public policy initiatives and social reform.

WOMEN LISTENING

In their individualized messages of financial blessing, televangelists tend to ignore the extent to which economic neoliberalization has produced local politics and market trends that limit the possibilities for average or “below” minimum wage working Americans such as residents of Halifax County. The agency that televangelists enjoy and endorse in their performances of wealth does not easily or necessarily translate into the lived experiences of everyday working-class women. The gendered and raced dynamics of black female televangelists articulating the same philosophy of triumph that white male televangelists perform potentially camouflages the challenges facing poor women of all races in the struggle for living wages, health care, and quality education, especially given the shrinking availability and access to resources for marginalized people under market-driven social and political initiatives.

Women in my research study appropriate some of the logics of televangelism's “religious dandyism” but often create alternative meanings for how religious messages should be adapted. Religious television does not monopolize

the attention of the women, but it offers a supplement to the messages that they hear weekly from their local pastors. Televised church is in dialogue not only with the local church, but also with the broader community—its socioeconomic possibilities, the popular discourse surrounding religious television, and the traditional gendered and raced dynamics of the area, along with a host of other influences.

The popular television messages of personal fulfillment and spiritual growth frequently inform and/or contradict women's discussions about their financial status. For Ms. Canty, a woman in her late seventies, T. D. Jakes's message opens up possibilities that she had not previously considered. He is for her a blessing. "I think he's just wonderful. I don't see anything wrong with what he does. A lot of people criticize him, but you know, people are going to criticize you, I don't care what you do. But, I don't have nothing to criticize about T. D. Jakes." His ministry to women and his constant encouragement that they get their personal lives together and become "leading ladies" are exactly what women need to hear. According to Ms. Canty, black women especially need to hear Jake's teachings, because they have not been exposed to this type of encouragement, certainly not from a minister. "Black women didn't have that before. Who tried to encourage you to have anything? I never had one encourage me. No, not my pastor. . . . One thing, they didn't think women should do this and do that, didn't think women should have their own business, you know. See, but that's where T. D. Jakes came in at. He got on up there and he let people know what the women can do. Yeah. Do you know of a black minister that did it? [Laughs.]" (Frederick-McGlathery 2006: 284). To Ms. Canty, black women are working against a set of historical assumptions, made not only by whites, but especially by black male preachers, who did not believe women capable of establishing successful business careers. "He's [Jakes] different from local pastors. They do not encourage women. . . . Mine don't at least." That Ms. Canty remains in a church where she recognizes the pastor's inadequate affirmation of women's ability demonstrates that she selectively reads not only televangelistic texts, but also the texts that come from her pastor weekly. Jakes, however, offers a corrective to her pastor. The encouragement she receives from him and the transformation she sees in the lives of other women is exactly what women today need. Jakes thus offers a type of agency that is accessible for women in the viewing audience to appropriate if they choose.

Annette credits the ministry of Creflo Dollar with helping her resolve to get out of debt and "save differently, invest in a 401K . . . to invest and bank some of that money." Hearing from Creflo Dollar taught her a great deal about investing, however, she doesn't want to go overboard. While encouraging prosperity, Dollar's message posed a dilemma for her. "With Creflo, I used to listen to him a lot . . . and I know that God wants us to prosper . . . but I don't want to get that much into it that I lose focus. You know some people are blessed with these things until they forget where it comes from. . . . I don't

think He wants us to be poor, you know, and always struggling. No. [Laughs.] And, I'm not complacent where I am, you know. . . . If I could just get me, not if, but *when*, because we are going to prosper and we're going to get some more money. Because, right now we're trying to get a new home, so we are going to prosper. I'm not worried about that" (Frederick-McGlathery 2006: 285). Struggling with the message of prosperity, she is both excited by the teaching, yet cautious lest it become unbalanced. The message, she worries, could cause her to "lose focus."

Currently living in a new double-wide trailer on their own land, Annette and her husband want to move into a modular home, something more permanent. While both homes are popular among lower-middle-class families in Halifax, a modular home is a step up. The ministers on television encourage Annette to save and invest so that she will have the money to make the transition. Before, she would "simply spend" money and not be able to account for where it went. Now, she pays special attention to how the money is used and the types of investments that she makes.

While she is not trusting God for a mansion, she is anticipating her own type of measured blessing in Halifax County. The ministers on television offer her that hope. As a public school teacher whose husband works in a local factory, she believes that she will not "always struggle," but instead she and her family "are going to get some money." They "are going to prosper." This prosperity comes strictly from her individual initiative, getting out of debt, investing in a 401K plan, saving, and giving to the ministry. It is the neoliberal gospel.

Much like Annette, Gail maintains concerns about Dollar's ministry, yet for her she has ceased watching him altogether because she has grown weary of his teachings on finances. "I don't listen to him anymore. There's nothing different. You know, every time I hear him, it's the same thing. . . . You know, sometimes you need to hear something more than prosperity. You know, you're going through some things and there's some other things that you're dealing with in your life. . . . You know, something spiritual. . . . You know, not just always prospering. So, that's why I stopped listening to him. . . . But, it's not that I didn't like his ministry. It's just that at different times in your life you need other Word coming forth" (Frederick-McGlathery 2006: 286). For Gail, Dollar's emphasis on the financial rewards of the Christian life exaggerates the claim of prosperity to the neglect of other teaching concerns.

While Annette views Dollar as a financial adviser, it is actually the ambiguity of his performance that sustains her attention. She needs for him to be both a financial adviser and a spiritual leader, a shrewd businessman as well as an empathetic fellow disciple. She cannot pursue his ministry for strictly financial reasons. This is why Gail ceased listening to Dollar's ministry. He focused too much on financial prosperity. For Annette, Dollar becomes problematic because he fails to traverse with sufficient ambiguity between blessing and contentment. He performs too much prosperity and not enough sacrifice.

Women in communities like Halifax County have complicated relationships with the performance of wealth on television based on the multiple and concurrent community messages that they experience daily as black women in a market-driven southern economy. While many enthusiastically embrace messages that inspire change, like the radically different messages of people like T. D. Jakes, they also make adjustments to the limits of the blessing in their lives. Many consider themselves “blessed and highly favored,” reflecting a resolution of greater subjective class positioning than objective. Subjective class on these grounds has more to do with extending the definition of prosperity to include good health, spiritual growth, and mental capacity.

The idea that watching wealthy people on television creates longing and dissonance for the viewing audience tells only a portion of the narrative for viewers of religious television. As women watch the prosperity of television evangelists, they have varied responses leading to different personal concessions. In my ethnographic research, the images on television vis-à-vis ongoing debates about class and racial identity formation on the ground create more tension than longing.

In many ways, women, despite their circumstances, describe themselves as “blessed and highly favored” as a means of appropriating the possibility of economic success. They work hard, give regularly (to their local church and/or the television ministry), save when possible, and hold onto hope that their circumstances will change. They work out the tension between their desire and their social circumstances through their faith. It is an individual journey. They are not calling on society or the government to intervene. They have renewed faith in the American dream and renewed faith in God to transform even their circumstances.

Women and the Politics of Neoliberalism

As evidenced in narratives of blessings, the logic of prosperity is built upon the strict power of the individual, and his or her faith, to transcend the social and political impediments to upward mobility. Often this message translates into a type of political conservatism that demands the strictest moral aptitude and eschews the influence of government in aiding the poor. Televangelists like Rod Parsley suggest that the problem with the poor is the government. For him, “The War on Poverty” has turned into a “War on the Poor” because of government welfare programs that he believes handicap the very people they are designed to help.

For evangelists like Parsley, a white male televangelist who is decidedly Republican, financial blessing is manifested through language affirming America, its Christian heritage, and its status as a land of limitless promise. A contemporary proponent of free-market capitalism, Parsley expresses to his

large mixed race audience in Columbus, Ohio, that welfare, union organizing, and industrial regulations are the contemporary causes of poverty, as opposed to rising CEO salaries, downsizing, and the deregulation of industry. The agentic power of faith along with the appropriate work ethic are the contemporary solutions to poverty. For evangelists like Parsley the free market works, their religious mantras often folding into a political paradigm that supports Republican values. While for African American evangelists these affiliations are often complicated, there is a growing sense that African American evangelists are leaning toward the Republican Party.

African American women in the viewing audience, however, consistently indicate that they share many similar concerns with televangelists, about personal morality and opposition to abortion; however, they remain Democrats because of a sense that "Republicans are for the rich." Throughout the interviews, even women who remained loyal to the Democratic Party simply out of "tradition" indicated that they hesitate to switch to the Republican Party because of their understanding that Republicans generally operate in the best interest of the wealthy in American society. Instead of listening to evangelists expound on their political issues, some women when watching televangelism opt to shift priorities from watching the segment to attending to other household needs. When asked whether or not she is influenced by the political beliefs of television ministers, Sandra insists that she is not at all influenced. "No. They don't influence me. . . . And, I used to watch the 700 Club at one time and they were totally Republican too. I don't let it influence me any at all, because when they get to talking about politics, then that's when I go out and go do whatever I've got to do. Whether they're talking and it's for Democrats or Republicans, either way. . . . I don't listen to it. Because that cannot influence what I know I need to do. I know Republicans are not for me. I don't have no money. I am just a poor, black, hard-working woman. [Chuckles.] With a strong mind to do exactly what I need to do. And, they're not. That's not for me" (Frederick-McGlathery 2006: 290). Sandra is clearly aware of the political affiliations of religious television personalities and yet continues to watch them as a source of inspiration. She simply chooses what to absorb and what to reject, at times physically adjusting her attention away from the television in order to resume other activities that she must complete. Recently employed by the U.S. Post Office after leaving the same type of abusive relationship that Juanita Bynum describes, Sandra is clearly aware of the class implications found in religious television. Having stayed with an abusive partner long enough for him to pay for her daughter's college tuition, she understands the social constraints placed on poor women.

This type of filtering is an ongoing process for the women in Halifax who watch television ministers. In a place like Halifax County where African Americans are everyday reminded of the burdens of poverty, the social context in which these women experience faith mediates how religion informs their sense

of political community. They are not passive viewers of religious dogma, but rather active participants in the construction of their own religious reality.

Conclusion

No longer promising the ethereal rewards of a good life to the marginalized poor, neo-Pentecostals spread the gospel of wealth to a burgeoning mainstream, material-based culture. Alongside their proclamations of spiritual regeneration, they perform wealth through upscale dress and personal style, narratives of financial blessing, and political support for a Republican America. At issue are the complexities of class hierarchies as these mediated messages reach into communities once removed from the extravagance that is presented on religious television. As women adopt many of the logics of religious personalities, it becomes simultaneously apparent that the invisible Spirit that joins women viewers and televangelists in biblical faith does not necessarily transcend the class (and racial) markers that divide them.

Nevertheless, the question remains. Given the emphasis on material abundance, are women coming away from religious television with more than a new financial plan and means for advancing into the middle-class mainstream? Are televangelists more than shrewd businesspersons with a strategy to lure money away from gullible followers? The presumption that televangelists are primarily after money or the pursuit of middle-class pleasures fails to capture the multiplicity of the religious vision. T. D. Jakes, for one, is both financial planner and Pentecostal revivalist, fellow sinner and marriage counselor, poor boy from West Virginia and multimillionaire. The consummate ambiguity surrounding which role is being performed at which time is the bridge that forms the relationship with audiences. Women are at once seeking business advice as well as marital counseling; eternal security as well as joy and peace in their daily lives. These women it seems are as varied in their pursuits of messages as televangelists are in their services.

Ambiguity factors into televangelists' performance as well as their presentations' reception by various, geographically dispersed, racially dynamic, and denominationally nuanced audiences. Analyzing the televised ministries of popular black male televangelists like T. D. Jakes and Creflo Dollar, black female televangelists like Juanita Bynum, white male televangelists like Rod Parsley, and white female televangelists like Joyce Meyers and Paula White by black Baptist women in Halifax County within the social context of everyday women's lives reveals the levels of ambiguity possible in the reception of religious television. It also reveals, in addition to ambiguity, a level of agency employed by the performer. The degree of agency simultaneously held by viewing audiences raises questions about the limits of religious performance.

That the message of prosperity, a fundamentally American message, translates to people around the globe speaks to the power of media and marketing.

Jean and John Comaroff suggest that it is the shift in the global market of opportunity that gives exceptional rise to what they consider “occult economies,” economies in which there is a sustained effort to conjure wealth through “magical” means. These philosophies are often based on the belief in the hyperagency of individuals to navigate their way through the market. From Johannesburg, South Africa, to the Universal Church of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to Halifax County, North Carolina, in the heart of the rural U.S. South, financial blessing is promised to both those of middle class as well as working-class and poor communities through the abundance of supernatural faith, a disciplined work ethic, and the continued performance of wealth. While the Comaroffs suggest that in South Africa much of the religious rhetoric in Pentecostal churches reflects “nuanced fantasies of abundance without effort, of beating capitalism at its own game by drawing a winning number at the behest of unseen forces,” this logic in the United States is increasingly combined with appeals to hard work, discipline, and moral living (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001a: 6). Poverty, in the message of many televangelists, is based not in financial markets and government policies but in the lack of faith as well as a lack of effort and hard work by poor people. The government, for its involvement (through the extension of certain welfare services) is merely complicit in the maintenance of poverty.

In his work *Globalization and Inequality*, John Rapley, a scholar at the University of the West Indies, argues that the new Pentecostalism represents “the religious face of neoliberalism.” Pointing to its expansion in places like Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Philippines, and the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc states, Rapley contends that this brand of Pentecostalism, with its blending of the faith gospel focuses on a “quest for a personal development that frequently writes the community—and with it any obligations to its other members, in particular its less fortunate ones—out of the picture.” “Such religions,” he concludes, “represent the religious face of neoliberalism: no more or less materialistic than the older religions, but far more individualistic” (Rapley 2004: 67).

The narrative of blessing preached over the airwaves creates a vast number of entrepreneurs and hopefuls. It inspires individual change and compels people to work toward their own success. It is without question a gospel of hope, one of possibility. Yet, hope and possibility lie solely in the hands of the individual. Transformation is possible, the testimonies promise, so long as individuals are ready to change. For some in the Word of Faith Movement, a change can happen instantaneously with the spoken word and a measure of faith. For others, a bit more traditional in their message, change comes through faith and Horatio Alger-type initiative. As televangelists perform and testify of prosperity, they simultaneously communicate to their listening audience that individual believers too have access to the same power of transformation that garnered prosperity for the preacher, faith. In this way faith becomes the great equalizer between those who are wealthy and those who struggle under the weight of neoliberal market economies.

Chapter 15

The Temporality of No Hope

HIROKAZU MIYAZAKI

The anthropologist and prominent Australian public intellectual Ghassan Hage has recently drawn attention to the changing character of capitalism and the increasing unequal distribution of hope following neoliberal reform. Hage writes, “Capitalist societies are characterised by a deep inequality in their distribution of hope, and when such inequality reaches an extreme, certain groups are not offered any hope at all” (2003: 17). According to Hage, as a result of the expansion of transnational firms, the character of capitalism has profoundly changed. Global capitalism in turn changed the way the state relates to society: “National and sub-national (such as State or provincial) governments all over the world are transformed from being primarily the managers of a national society to being the managers of the aesthetics of investment space” (19).

This retreat of the state from society has resulted in what Hage terms the “shrinking society”: “Societal hope, which is . . . about one’s sense of the possibilities that life can offer, is not necessarily related to an income level. Its enemy is a sense of entrapment, of having nowhere to go, not a sense of poverty. As the state withdraws from society and the existing configuration of hope begins shrinking, many people, even those with middle-class incomes—urban dwellers paradoxically stuck in insecure jobs, farmers working day and night without ‘getting anywhere,’ small-business people struggling to keep their businesses going, and many more—have begun suffering various forms of hope scarcity” (Hage 2003: 20). Hage argues that those people who have lost hope tend to cling to the old idea of their national society as “a passport to hope”: “‘Deep down,’ they know that their national society is no longer ‘servicing’ them, but like a child whose mother has stopped feeding her, the very idea of such a reality is too hard to accept and to think. . . . Increasingly, their attachment to such a non-feeding nation generates a specific paranoid form of nationalism. . . . Paranoid nationalists are the no-hopers produced by transcendental capitalism and the policies of neo-liberal government” (21). Extending Pierre Bourdieu’s understanding of society as a “mechanism for

the generation of meanings for life" (Hage 2003: 16), Hage proposes that societies be reconceptualized as "mechanisms for the distribution of hope" (3). Hage suggests that citizens have an "obligation to recapture the ethical foundations of society by dislodging those who have imprisoned it in the dungeons of neo-liberal economic profitability" (152).

Hage's observations about the condition of no hope in neoliberalism powerfully resonate with several Japanese public intellectuals' concerted effort to address the loss of hope in Japanese society. The previously prevalent view of Japanese society as a society comprising "a hundred million middle-class people" (*ichioku so churyu*) has been replaced by the view of Japanese society as a "stratified society" (*kakusa shakai*) divided into "winners" (*kachigumi*) and "losers" (*makegumi*) (see, e.g., Miura 2005). In this discursive shift from an emphasis on equality to an emphasis on competition, hope has emerged as a subject of intense public debate in a particular way. Underlying this intense interest in hope and the lack thereof is these Japanese public intellectuals' shared concern with the pervasive celebration by the government as well as by the media of the neoliberal ideal of "strong individuals" (*tsuyoi kojīn*) ready to take risks (*risuku*) while taking responsibilities for their own risk-taking action (*jiko sekinin*) (see also Borovoy, this volume; Miyazaki 2006). These Japanese public intellectuals' work—like Hage's—primarily involves those who are neoliberalism's "losers."

The leading figures in this debate are the labor economist Genda Yuji and the sociologist Yamada Masahiro. Both Genda and Yamada focus on a variety of hotly debated social problems regarding Japanese youth such as the phenomenon of *hikikomori*, or the reluctance among Japanese teenagers to socialize with other people in preference for being alone in their rooms, the phenomenon of "parasite singles," or those who remain unmarried while living with and depending financially on their parents, the phenomenon of "freeters," or those young people who refuse to seek permanent employment, and the phenomenon of "NEET" ("not in education, employment, or training"), or those who have no will to study or work (see Genda 2001, 2005b, and 2006; Genda and Maganuma 2004; Yamada 2004). According to Genda and Yamada, these phenomena are manifestations of Japanese youth's "loss of hope" (*kibo no soshitsu*) (Yamada 2004: 20; see also Genda 2001 and 2005b; Genda and Maganuma 2004).

In his celebrated book *Shigoto no naka no aimaina fuan* (A Nagging Sense of Job Insecurity), Genda Yuji notes that the lack of hope among Japanese youth can be attributed to the way the government and the media approach freeters, NEET, and other social phenomena as problems with youth. Drawing on government statistics on Japan's labor markets, Genda points to a more structural cause of these phenomena, that is, to the fact that Japanese corporations significantly reduced the number of new employees in the late 1990s (Genda 2005b: 45–49). Genda argues that the corporate emphasis on productivity

neglects the grave consequences the current reform of employment practices has had for youth (Genda 2005b: 44).

Elsewhere Genda points out that the phenomenon of NEET does not necessarily reflect young people's reluctance to work (Genda and Maganuma 2004: 244). In his view, people categorized as NEET have never had an opportunity to learn to find their own way in society. Genda suggests that the phenomenon rather reflects a neoliberal overemphasis on "self-realization" (*jiko-jitsugen*) and the importance of finding one's real dream (*yume*). Genda proposes a counseling program for fourteen-year-old middle school students focusing on how to survive and cope in the world and has also written a book on the nature of work for fourteen-year-old middle school students (Genda 2005a).

Likewise, in his book *Kibo kakusa shakai* (The Stratified Hope Society), Yamada Masahiro has argued that hope is now distributed unevenly in society. According to Yamada, the current celebration of risk-taking "strong individuals" is facilitating what he terms the "bipolarization" (*nikyokuka*) of Japanese society into "winners" (*kachigumi*), that is, those who actively take risks in pursuit of economic success, on the one hand, and "losers" (*makegumi*), those who have given up, on the other hand (Yamada 2004: 12–13). According to Yamada, freeters, NEET, and parasite singles are typical examples of those who do not even try to become winners. In Yamada's view, neoliberal reforms will not solve the problem of hope because neoliberalism neglects the fact that it produces losers as well as winners: "The losers in the new economy are not simply those who cannot make ends meet, who do not have a place to live or who are in starvation. They are those who 'cannot have hope in life.' In a relatively wealthy society, humans do not live on bread. They live on hope. The stratification the new economy has created is stratification by hope. For a minority of people, their efforts may be rewarded to a greater degree than they were in the old economy. In contrast, [the new economy] produces those who feel that their efforts will never be rewarded. What the new economy is taking away from people with ordinary capabilities is hope" (Yamada 2004: 231–32; my translation). Yamada notes that neither a radical shift to individualism nor a nostalgic return to a big welfare government will effectively solve this problem because the problem Japan faces at this moment is not simply economic but "psychological." In Yamada's view, the government needs to provide assistance with "individual efforts to cope" (*kojinteki taisho*) (2004: 241).

In analyzing the nexus of neoliberal economic reforms and the loss of hope, Hage, Genda, and Yamada propose different ways in which hope could be restored in society. Hage proposes a regime change. In contrast, Genda and Yamada propose more limited and pragmatic measures specifically targeting those whom they see as losing hope. Yet all agree that hope no longer exists as it did in the past. More specifically, they all share a view that hope was more

evenly distributed in society in the past. In other words, underlying these public intellectuals' diagnosis of neoliberalism through the analytic of hope is a particular temporal frame, that is, the temporality of no longer.

In what follows, I turn to a similar diagnosis of the loss of hope in Japan in the internationally acclaimed novelist Murakami Ryu's 2000 best seller *Kībo no kuni no ekuzodasu* (Exodus in a Country of Hope) (Murakami 2002a). Unlike Hage, Genda, and Yamada, however, Murakami resolutely refuses to reclaim hope. Instead, he dwells on the condition of no hope and gestures toward what comes *after* hope. Underlying this move is Murakami's more general refusal of normative knowledge directed toward a particular remedy. In the second half of the chapter, I juxtapose Murakami's approach to the condition of no hope with the way certain Japanese securities traders who participated in my ethnographic research from 1997 to 2006 approached a condition of the absence of profit opportunities—or more precisely a movement toward it—in the Japanese financial markets.

My juxtaposition of fiction and finance is not entirely accidental. Murakami's novel was based on numerous interviews with financial experts and practitioners (see Murakami 2000). More important, both Murakami and the Japanese traders I knew share a sense of absence—the absence of hope in Murakami's case and the absence of profit opportunities known as arbitrage opportunities in the traders' case. What draws them together even more significantly is their ambivalence toward what has been or is being lost and what needs to be done about that loss. The focus of my investigation is precisely on this shared ambivalence and the work it does in the two contrasting forms of engagement with neoliberalism and global capitalism. In both cases, I argue, ambivalence serves as a strategy for maintaining a nondirectional form of engagement with the world.

A Country Without Hope

In this country, there is everything. Indeed, there are all kinds of things. The only thing that [this country] does not have is hope. (Kono kuni ni wa nandemo aru. Honto ni iroirona mono ga arimasu. Daga kibo dake ga nai.) (Murakami 2002a: 314; my translation)

Murakami Ryu's novel *Kībo no kuni no ekuzodasu* has attracted much media attention to the problem of hope (*kibo*) in Japan.¹ This 2000 best seller was first serialized in *Bungei Shunju*, a monthly literary magazine for business elites, from 1998 to 1999 (Murakami 2002a). In this novel set in 2003, Murakami has his middle school student protagonist, Ponchan, make the remark quoted above. In the novel, Ponchan's statement prompts middle school students na-

tionwide to stop attending school. The students start an Internet news distributor, begin to exert considerable influence over global financial markets by distributing new statistical information about the global markets, and eventually move to Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, to establish a new community with its own regional currency. Ponchan's statement about the lack of hope in Japan seems to have resonated with what at the time of the publication of the novel was widely described as a "sense of blockage" (*heisokukan*), that is, an incapacity to envision a brighter future.

Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu was the culmination of the novelist Murakami Ryu's long-standing interest in the world of money and finance. In preparing for this project, Murakami conducted a number of interviews with economists, currency traders, and Internet-related business owners.² The author of acclaimed novels such as 1976's *Kagirinaku tome ni chikai buru* (Almost Transparent Blue) (Murakami 1977) and 1980's *Koin rokka beibizu* (Coin Locker Babies) (Murakami 1995) turned to the world of money and finance with *Ai to genso no fashizumu* (Fascism of Love and Illusion) (Murakami 1987) at the height of Japan's bubble economy. By the late 1990s, Murakami had become a popular commentator on the Japanese economy. Murakami maintains a *meru magajin* (Internet list server) called Japan Mail Media, or JMM (<http://ryumurakami.jmm.co.jp>), focusing on economic and financial issues. In 2000, Murakami collaborated with the public television station Nihon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) to produce a popular "NHK Special" program entitled "*Ushinawareta junen*" *wo tou* (Querying "the Lost Decade") devoted to an analysis of Japan's long recession that followed the burst of the bubble economy. Murakami also published two "picture books" (*ehon*) on finance: *Ano kane de nani ga kaetaka?* (What Could Have Been Bought with That Money?), a critique of the Japanese government's injection of public funds into failing megabanks (Murakami 1999); and *Ojisan wa yama e . . . kanemoke ni: Toki-toshite toshi wa kibo wo umu* (Grandpa Goes to the Mountain . . . to Make Money: Sometimes, Investment Produces Hope) (Murakami 2002b), an introduction to basic concepts in financial economics, such as risk and portfolio management.

In all these efforts, Murakami has expressed both fascination with and skepticism toward the Japanese government's program of neoliberal economic reforms and financial globalization. For example, in the preface to *Ano kane de nani ga kaetaka?* Murakami states:

Today, the so-called casino economy, or the monetary flow in financial markets, hugely surpasses the cash economy. . . .

There is no point in complaining about this situation, however. The global financial market is real, and there is no point in simply hating or inciting hatred against it. The purpose of this picture book is not to indulge in regretting and grieving the past or the present but to raise an awareness that each one of us is an "economic subject" [*keizai no shutai*]. This is not an easy task. Even compared to ten years ago, finance and economy have become far more complex beyond our imagination. (Murakami 1999: 6; my translation)

Murakami asserts, “What is important is to ‘know,’ that is, to know to what extent we know and what we don’t know” (Murakami 1999: 7; my translation). In this equation of knowledge and subject formation, Murakami sharply criticizes a particular brand of individualism actively promoted by the Japanese government and the Japanese media as a necessary condition for Japan’s economic recovery. In particular, Murakami cautions against the collective hope associated with the notion of risk-taking strong individuals.

By the late 1990s, *risuku to jiko-sekinin* (“risk and self-responsibility”) had emerged as a popular catchphrase in the government’s efforts to promote “independent individuals” (*jiritsushita kojīn*) or “strong individuals capable of bearing the heavy weight of freedom” (*jīyū no jūatsu ni taeru tsuyoi kojīn*) (Nihon Keizai Shinbun 1999: 2). The phrase saturated the media as if it were the key to becoming a winner (*shosha* or *kachigumi*) in what the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, a financial daily newspaper, has termed the “new capitalism” (*shin-shihonshugi*) (Nihon Keizai Shinbun 1999). Murakami notes that words such as “self-responsibility” are “beginning to circulate without being scrutinized thoroughly for their conceptual integrity and their applicability to Japanese society. . . . Today Japan is filled with a short-circuited and dangerous cultural expectation that these new economic concepts will generate new values and in turn will break through the blockage we are currently experiencing” (Murakami 1999: 8–9; my translation). On the notion of risk, Murakami remarks:

There is no Japanese word for the English word, “risk.” Similarly, we can’t translate “incentive” into a Japanese word. . . .

JMM [Japan Mail Media] does not take on big tasks such as “creation of a vision” or “discussion of new policies.” Instead, it has sought to scrutinize concepts and words so that we may have a debate about them. This is because I felt that the preexisting media tends to discuss ideas, concepts, and words without defining them precisely.

For example, the question, “how should Japanese people live in an era in which each individual independently should take risk and take responsibility for his or her action?” is a contradiction but no one points that out. If each one of us is expected to become independent, it does not make sense to ask, “How should Japanese people live now?”³

Here Murakami points to the inherently contradictory impulses underlying the collectivizing project of reinventing Japanese national identity through the idiom of individualism.

Murakami’s refusal to endorse a single vision for Japan’s collective future permeates his approach to the subject of hope. Although the media has fixated attention on his character Ponchan’s above-mentioned remark on the loss of hope as a diagnosis of the nation’s mood at the turn of the millennium, it is important to note that, read in its full context, Murakami has Ponchan say something much more ambiguous: “I just said that there was everything

but hope in this country. However, we have not figured out if hope is indeed essential to humans. Yet, it would be impossible to examine this question as long as one is subject to this country's system. Inside the country where the only self-evident thing is the fact that there is no hope, we have concluded that we would not be able to think about whether hope is an essential thing for humans" (Murakami 2002a: 319; my translation). In the postscript to his 2000 publication *Kyoseichu*,⁴ a novel about the *hikikomori* syndrome mentioned above, Murakami makes his ambivalence toward collective hope more explicit:

I have a feeling that contemporary Japanese society does not need hope. Hope is something you need in adverse situations. Because hope is expectation or conviction that the future will be better than the present, those who are in refugee camps or those who are oppressed are those who need hope most. In contrast, the majority ruling class or dictators probably do not think about hope. Children need hope because all children live their present for the future.

One reason that it looks as if contemporary Japanese society does not need hope is that no one in this society has a precise grasp of the present. One cannot think about the future unless one has a precise grasp of the present.

Perhaps the time has come when social hope is not necessary. Maybe what a society needs to provide is not so much a ready-made hope for everyone as various kinds of "safety nets." Hope may have become something each individual must discover on his or her own rather than something that a society provides but this very fact is tactically concealed. In other words, we are swamped with outdated and useless hopes as well as fake social hopes.

Perhaps those with the *hikikomori* syndrome are rejecting these fake social hopes. (Murakami 2003: 301–2; my translation)

In fact, in newspaper interviews and elsewhere, Murakami has repeatedly insisted that his novel *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu* is not about hope. When a journalist for the weekly newsmagazine *Aera* asked Murakami what he meant by "hope" in the novel, Murakami is said to have responded, "I have nothing to say about hope [in that novel]. It is sufficient if the reader can apprehend a power to live a life without contemplating the nature of hope."⁵ Indeed, the ending of *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu* is symptomatic of Murakami's reluctance to claim a particular vision for Japan's future. After visiting the community that Ponchan and other middle school students established in Hokkaido, Sekiguchi, the narrator of the novel, a freelance journalist who in many ways acts as a supporter of the middle school students' efforts, recalls Ponchan's statement about lack of hope in Japan and asks himself, "Is there hope in this comfortable and artificial town?" (Murakami 2002a: 424; my translation). The novel ends with Sekiguchi's remark, "I have not reached a conclusion [about this town's future]" [*Ore wa mada ketsuron wo dashite inai*] (Murakami 2002a: 424). Ironically, in the context of the neoliberal celebration of the risk-taking strong individual as a model for Japan's collective future, Murakami's refusal to provide a diagnosis of Japan as a collective entity surfaces as a much more fundamentalist form of individualism. Even more ironically, the result of this

individualism is Murakami's highly ambivalent approach to hope and the lack thereof.

Anticipating a Condition of No Longer

The economist Kaneko Masaru has pointed out that the ambiguous and ambivalent ending of Murakami's novel *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu* "succinctly captures the friction between fantasy and realism" (Kaneko 2001: 46) intrinsic to the world of money and finance:

According to *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu*, despair and utopia are two sides of the same coin. What links them is the tension generated by the clash between realism and fantasy. The economy, and in particular the world of finance, is thoroughly dictated by realism. There, money flows cold-bloodedly toward wherever there are profit opportunities. There is no other principle than the pursuit of profit. However, money needs a "collective illusion" somewhere [in its foundation], and as the process of the economic bubble and its collapse has shown, in reality financial markets are nothing but an "economy of illusion" driven by asset prices. And it is humans that drive the market. Therefore, in this world, realism and fantasy collide in the harshest way. Murakami situates himself in the midst of [that collision]. (Kaneko 2001: 44–45, my translation)

I want to juxtapose Murakami's novel and the world of money and finance in a slightly different way. From my point of view, what Murakami and the Japanese securities traders I knew share is a sense of absence (or a movement toward it) and associated ambivalence toward what has been or is being lost. Such ambivalence paradoxically in turn allows them to dwell on the sense of absence. The following discussion of the Japanese traders' understanding of their trading strategy, arbitrage, and its ontological implications will bring this ambivalence into sharp focus.

The Japanese traders who participated in my ethnographic research from 1998 to 2006 were members of a proprietary trading team set up within a major Japanese securities firm in the late 1980s, when the Japanese government allowed Japanese stock exchanges to launch futures, options, and other financial derivative products (Miyazaki 2003). To the extent that the team's work was enabled by the deregulation of the Japanese financial markets, the traders could be seen as active agents of the Japanese government's neoliberal economic reform program and the globalization of the Japanese economy more generally. More important, when the Japanese firm closed down the team's operations in the late 1990s in the midst of Japan's financial crisis and the firm's decision to partner with a U.S. financial conglomerate, many of the traders I knew explicitly embraced the neoliberal rhetoric of the "strong individual" and seized opportunities rapidly opening outside the Japanese firm (Miyazaki 2006). Some joined foreign investment banks while others joined boutique investment firms and other financial trading-related ventures.

Many of these traders apprehended their personal transition in terms of the failure of the Japanese style of business, management, and capitalism more generally under which they had long operated (Miyazaki 2003 and 2006; Miyazaki and Riles 2005). As I have discussed extensively elsewhere, in their view, the eventual failure of their trading team was due to its overemphasis on the value of collective learning at the expense of individual merits (Miyazaki 2003). The neoliberal celebration of strong individuals primarily concerned with their own worth rather than a collective goal, such as Japanese corporations' long-standing common goal of "catching up and overtaking" (*oitsuke oikose*) their U.S. counterparts, crystallized these traders' sense of a new beginning.

And yet the traders shared a profound sense of loss, or more precisely a movement toward it, and ambivalence toward their own work. Their sense of absence and ambivalence largely derived from arbitrage, the trading strategy in which they were originally trained and specialized.

In arbitrage, traders typically search for differences in the prices of a single asset traded in two different markets or in the prices of any two assets that they see economically linked. Arbitrageurs seek to turn these price differences into their own profits by simultaneously buying low and selling high. In order to determine whether differences in the present market prices of two given assets constitute an arbitrage opportunity, however, arbitrageurs need to calculate the prices of those assets in a condition of "no arbitrage," that is, a hypothetical situation in which there is no room for arbitrage between the two assets in question. In this sense, the possibility of arbitrage paradoxically relies on its absence. Furthermore, the market is supposed to achieve a condition of no arbitrage as a result of arbitrageurs' efforts to seize arbitrage opportunities (see MacKenzie 2006; Miyazaki 2007a and 2007b). In arbitrageurs' view, therefore, arbitrageurs' own action diminishes arbitrage opportunities (see Miyazaki 2003).

For example, the Japanese arbitrageurs I knew attributed a decrease in profit opportunities in a given market to their own and other arbitrageurs' arbitrage operations. This understanding in turn prompted the arbitrageurs to look for more obscure arbitrage opportunities in the same market or arbitrage opportunities in other markets. Practically speaking, arbitrage opportunities could be spotted anywhere and anytime, but each arbitrage operation was closely tied to a theoretical condition of no arbitrage in which arbitrage opportunities *no longer* exist.

The movement toward absence integral to the idea of arbitrage intensified the traders' more general and widely shared sense of a fast-approaching end to their own trading career (Miyazaki 2005). They said that if they had not already done so, they would eventually confront the limitations of their intellectual, mental, and physical capabilities (Miyazaki 2005: 31). They traded in anticipation of a moment at which their trading strategy would no longer

work, their experience would no longer count, their stamina would no longer last, and their interest would no longer sustain their concentration. The traders I knew traded within what I term “the temporality of no longer” at two different levels. The traders simultaneously saw both an approaching endpoint to their trading career, on the one hand, and a condition of no arbitrage to be created by their own arbitraging moves, on the other hand (Miyazaki, n.d.). Hope (*kibo*) was not always the word the traders used in their discussion of their future. But in anticipation of those moments in which they would need to confront the temporal limits imposed by both their profession and their arbitrage operations, the traders often mentioned their dreams (*yume*) and ideas about the meaning of life (*ikigai*) (cf. Kelsky 2001; Mathews 1996). These dreams were always located outside the market for them.

One trader dreamed of a moment at which he would have earned two hundred million yen and would be able to quit trading so that he might travel around Japan by bicycle (Miyazaki 2006). Another trader dreamed of publishing an article in an English-language peer-review journal on stochastic processes. Yet another told me that his “last dream” (*saigo no yume*) was to establish a clinic for those young people suffering from the *hikikomori* syndrome. Another simply mentioned that his hope was to see his son grow up. In these dreams, the traders sought to find their exit from their profession as they increasingly found themselves confronting the temporal limits of their own capabilities in one way or another (Miyazaki n.d.; see also Miyazaki 2005: 32).

These arbitrageurs’ apprehension of an endpoint to their career draws attention to a distinctly ambivalent framing of a condition of no longer. That is, they simultaneously anticipated both a condition of no arbitrage in each arbitrage operation and an arbitrage operation elsewhere, while imagining an end to their own trading career. In other words, the arbitrageurs dreamed of the future convergence of two temporal horizons, one fast closing and the other distantly opening, at two different levels in their daily participation in arbitrage and its propensity toward its absence.

It is important not to exaggerate the self-canceling logic underlying these arbitrageurs’ view of arbitrage, however. The arbitrageurs’ ambivalence toward closing and opening horizons coincided with ambivalence of yet another register, that is, ambivalence toward the category of arbitrage itself (see Miyazaki 2007a, 2007b, and n.d.).

In financial markets, arbitrageurs are often contrasted with speculators whose investment strategy requires them to actively take risks and positions based on their prediction of future market movements. In many financial economics textbooks, arbitrage is described as “risk-free” (see, e.g., Hull 1997: 12). To the extent that arbitrage is based on the calculation of the theoretical—not arbitrageable—asset prices, arbitrage is ostensibly not dependent on an arbitrary view of the future direction of the market. The arbitrageurs I knew, however, were always conscious of the ambiguity surrounding the category of

arbitrage as opposed to the category of speculation. In their view, arbitrage could also be seen as a form of speculation in that it was also based on a faith of a sort, that is, a faith in a hypothetical condition of no arbitrage. Moreover, arbitrage operations often demand active risk taking (see, e.g., Beunza and Stark 2004; MacKenzie 2006; Miyazaki 2007b).

Yet the same arbitrageurs also refused to abandon the distinction between speculation and arbitrage. As I have noted elsewhere, they embraced the distinction as an “as if” distinction and the ambivalence that comes with it (Miyazaki 2007a and 2007b). In their view, arbitrage was only possible in terms of its absence, and the connection between arbitrage and a condition of arbitrage itself was ambiguous due to its explicitly fictional status. For the traders I knew, therefore, arbitrage and speculation pointed to two contrasting configurations of belief and doubt (Miyazaki 2007a and 2007b). If speculation demanded a faithlike commitment to a prediction, arbitrage demanded an oscillation between faith in and skepticism about arbitrage’s self-canceling logic that connected arbitrage to its absence.

I argue that such ambivalence allowed the arbitrageurs I knew to dwell on the anticipation closing and opening temporal horizons (cf. Crapanzano 2004). In anticipation of, or rather in daily intimation of, the condition of no arbitrage, the traders were always on the lookout for an ideal exit point from arbitrage. And yet paradoxically their ambivalence toward their own work and the distinction between arbitrage and speculation in turn allowed the arbitrageurs to continually engage in arbitrage operations of all kinds rather than simply quit trading altogether in order to pursue their respective dreams outside the market. In other words, their anticipation of a condition of no longer rested on the maintenance of their ambivalent stance.

Toward a Nondirectional Knowledge

In a series of writings on hope, the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch deployed the category of “not yet”: “A relatively still Unconscious disposed towards its other side, forwards rather than backwards. Towards the side of something new that is dawning up that has never been conscious before, not, for example, something forgotten, something rememberable that has been, something that has sunk into the subconscious in repressed or archaic fashion” (Bloch 1986: 11). Bloch defines the category of “not yet” in contradiction to the Freudian category of “no longer.” Whereas Freud’s psychoanalysis focuses on the repressed drive of the “no longer conscious,” Bloch’s philosophy of hope focuses on the anticipatory drive of the “not yet conscious,” that is, on the capacity of “what has not yet become” to move a present moment forward (Bloch 1986: 115–16; see also Kellner and O’Hara 1976: 24–25; Miyazaki 2004: 14). In my previous work on Bloch’s philosophy of hope, I have argued that Bloch’s effort to reorient philosophical inquiry from “what has already become” to “what

has not yet become" echoes the way hope remains in the realm of "not yet" even after its fulfillment. By proposing an open-ended style of philosophical inquiry, Bloch redefines hope as a method rather than a subject to be domesticated by preexisting analytical categories and concerns. I have argued that for Bloch hope resides in this reorientation from subject to method itself (see Miyazaki 2004).

In contrast, social theorists' current concern with hope tends to situate hope in the realm of the no longer. For example, David Harvey laments social theorists' loss of hope and their ability to imagine alternatives to capitalism. He proposes that social theorists learn from capitalists' speculative spirit and associated optimism (Harvey 2000). Likewise, Hage, Genda, and Yamada all have pointed out that hope no longer exists in society as it did in the past and have proposed different measures for restoring hope in society. As the Japanese anthropologist Naoki Kasuga has noted about recent writings about Japanese youths' loss of hope, all of these writings on hope have approached the loss of hope as a "problem" in search of a "solution" (Kasuga 2007: 184). In contrast to all of these, Murakami refuses to reclaim hope. Instead, by letting the category of "hope" sink into the realm of "no longer," he seeks to dwell on the sense of loss.

The current preoccupation among Japanese public intellectuals with the loss of hope may also recall the recurrent trope of loss or "vanishing" in Japanese modernity, which Marilyn Ivy has examined (Ivy 1995). If nostalgia is a familiar response to loss, however, Murakami's reflection on the loss of hope in Japan points to an entirely different response to loss. Murakami remarks:

When one cannot show any hopefulness, another effective method is to sentimentally hint at the fact that something has been lost and will not be recovered. . . .

There is much to think about the question of loss. First, we need to ask a fundamental question about whether [what seems to have been lost] has really been lost. Perhaps it has merely changed its appearance. That is, it has simply transformed into something else. [We also need to keep in mind that] loss tends to generate a sense of unity with a community. This is a question of [the function of] customs and institutions. We certainly have lost something but maybe something else can serve as its replacement. Also, having lost something, how should we remember what has been lost? If we investigate these [questions] with precision and rigor, sentimentality disappears. (Murakami 2005: 93–94; my translation)

Paradoxically, Murakami's commitment to precise and rigorous reasoning engenders ambivalence toward what has been lost. Murakami was one of the first Japanese public intellectuals to point out that hope no longer exists in Japanese society, but in his subsequent writings, he repeatedly has sought to downplay the importance of hope. In other words, Murakami has made the problem of hope sequentially appear and disappear so that the sense of loss may not turn into nostalgia and restorative work.

Murakami's ambivalence toward the category of hope resonates with the

copresence of belief in and skepticism about arbitrage in the Japanese traders' arbitrage operations. To the extent that arbitrage was imagined to create a condition of no arbitrage in the market, arbitrage anticipated its absence, that is, a condition of no arbitrage. This anticipation in turn generated diverse imaginations about what might come after arbitrage (see Miyazaki 2006 and n.d.). In other words, in arbitrage, what Bloch has termed the "not yet conscious" was encapsulated in the anticipation of a condition of no longer, and yet another horizon of not yet appeared outside this temporal framing. But this simultaneous viewing of not yet and no longer was only enabled by what the arbitrageurs saw as an "as if" distinction between arbitrage and speculation. Ultimately, the traders were not entirely sure if they were truly arbitrageurs or speculators. This ambivalence allowed the arbitrageurs to dwell on the anticipation of no longer without actually abandoning arbitrage altogether.

What Murakami and the Japanese arbitrageurs share is an ambivalent acknowledgment of absence within the logic of neoliberalism and global capitalism (see also Miyazaki 2007a). Their insistence on dwelling on a condition of no longer (or a movement toward it) draws attention to a distinctive form of engagement with the world they seem to share. Just as the arbitrageurs resolutely insisted on differentiating themselves from speculators (and speculators' faith in their own prediction), Murakami has sought to move away from the normative form of knowledge exemplified by Genda and Yamada's writings on the loss of hope.⁶ Murakami's ambivalence stands out in a Japanese public culture dominated by highly prescriptive forms of argument for specific remedies and solutions to ostensible social problems.

In these two contrasting forms of active engagement with neoliberalism and global capitalism, ambivalence has surfaced as a common strategy for maintaining a nondirectional stance. This shared commitment gestures toward a paradoxically hopeful possibility that the critical study of neoliberalism and global capitalism could reorient itself radically to embrace its loss of direction.

Notes

Introduction

1. I borrow the adjective from Malcolm Bull's critique of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, entitled "Smooth Politics." *Smooth* is Bull's metaphor for a vision of the political stripped of the complications of social life (Bull 2004: 223).

2. For a lapidary discussion of neoliberalism as ideology, see Harvey 2005: 2.

3. On neoliberalism's "zones of social abandonment," see Biehl 2005. On the effects of neoliberal reform in terms of deepening poverty and debt, persistent insecurity, or exclusion, see Bourgois 1995; Briggs 2004; Mbembe and Roitman 1995; Roitman 2005. On the connections between national regimes committed to neoliberalism and new forms of social conflict and control, see Ong 2006. For a reformulation of Gramscian notions of subalterity in relation to neoliberalism's social effects on marginal communities, see Williams 2002. For discussion of ethnography in relation to social effects of neoliberalism, see Almeida 2005; contributions to *American Ethnologist* 2008; Goldstein 2004; Hale 2005; Mbembe 2004; D. Nugent 2001; Postero 2005; Speed 2005; Speed and Sierra 2005.

4. On neoliberalism and Africa, see Ferguson 2006; on Southeast and East Asia, see Ong 2006; on ethnic movements in the global South, see Comaroff and Comaroff, in press.

5. The conditions of eligibility attached to investment, trade, and lending agreements (e.g., structural adjustment) challenge social rights and, in general, pull national governments away from their moorings in local political participation and accountability (Coronil 1997; Paley 2001; Greenhouse 2005b; see Zulaika, this volume). Not only "democracy deficit" (Aman 2004) but also more fundamental strains between national and local political, social, and economic arenas are hallmarks of neoliberal governance, resulting in massive dislocation and marginalization of the poor and middle class. "Verticality" and "encompassment" are enduring structural dilemmas for national states in this transnational context (as anthropologists Ferguson and Gupta have shown [2002])—dilemmas in part because from a practical standpoint they vex the legal distinction between the public and private sectors (for discussion, particularly as a problem of democratic accountability, see Wedel 2004).

6. In an op-ed column shortly after the hurricane, David Brooks (2005) argued that the devastation of New Orleans was "Katrina's silver lining"—a chance to rebuild the city in a way that would nullify the effects of poverty (primarily by redesigning rather than rebuilding, and encouraging redistribution of the population under the slogan

“Culturally Integrate. Culturally Integrate. Culturally Integrate.” This, he suggested, is “the only chance we have to break the cycle of poverty [for] people who lack middle-class skills into neighborhoods with people who possess these skills and who insist on certain standards of behavior.” And so on.

7. Earlier, Weber dwelled on the ambiguous proximity of democracy and tyranny within formalism and, in particular, the unsettling parallels between popular justice and the “star chamber” of the absolute monarch (Weber 1954: 356).

8. In this context, it is relevant to take note of popular attempts to reconstruct the continuous space of the nation by demanding or contesting the state’s management of public utilities—e.g., water (and more recently gas) in Bolivia (Postero 2005: 73), oil in Venezuela (Coronil 1997), and, more diffusely, energy in the United States (Haugerud, this volume).

9. The term “cross-disciplinary” in this context comes from Kamala Visweswaran, in her comments at the editorial workshop in Princeton on October 15, 2005.

10. See Slackman 2005.

11. The phrases “privileged discourse” and “perpetual undoing” are from Cavell’s essay on the politics of interpretation (1984: 31, 29).

Chapter 1. Security and the Neoliberal State

1. A section of the analysis of neoliberalism was published in Hall 2005.

2. For more on new public management, see Kettl 2000 and McLaughlin et al. 2002.

3. A first attempt to find an internationally acceptable definition of terrorism was made under the League of Nations in 1937. More recently, an Ad Hoc Committee was established by the UN General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996, whose mandate has been “to develop a comprehensive legal framework of conventions dealing with international terrorism.” This mandate continued to be renewed and revised on an annual basis by the General Assembly. As this chapter goes to press, a comprehensive convention on international terrorism has yet to be agreed upon, and there remains no consensus on a legal definition of terrorism. The Ad Hoc Committee is due to reconvene in June 2009. “Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/129 of 11 December 2008, the thirteenth session of the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996, will be held at the United Nations Headquarters from 29 June to 2 July 2009” (United Nations 2009).

4. The consultation reports I discuss here reflect examples taken from only one vehicle among many in which British Muslim political views on British and American war efforts, currently and in the context of the prior Gulf War, were articulated and circulated in the public sphere. For analyses of the longer history of British Muslim responses to British engagement in both the Gulf war and more recent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, see Werbner 2002, Birt 2005, and Modood 2005.

5. See Jean and John Comaroff’s recent edited volume (2006), which brings together a number of articles addressing issues of the law, disorder, and neoliberal governance in the postcolony.

6. On June 11, 2008, the House of Commons with a vote of 315–306 passed a proposal to extend the amount of time the police can hold terrorists suspects without charge while an investigation is being conducted from twenty-eight to forty-two days. The nine votes that secured the government’s victory came from members of the Democratic Unionist Party, the Northern Ireland Protestants who share power in Belfast with Roman Catholic Sinn Féin (J. F. Burns 2008). However, on October 13, 2008, the House of Lords inflicted what the press called a “humiliating defeat” on

the government, rejecting with a vote of 309–118 any attempt to increase the current twenty-eight-day limit on detention (Russell 2008).

Chapter 3. Liberalism Against Neoliberalism

Research for this chapter was done under three National Science Foundation grants from the Law and Social Science Program: SBE 94-11889 and SBE 95-14174 (SGER) (for Hungary) and SBE 01-11963 (for Russia). NSF deserves many thanks but it is not committed to what I say. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the extraordinary help and cooperation of the two constitutional courts I discuss here, and the crucial assistance of the Institute for Law and Public Policy in Moscow, which hosted me while I was there in 2003. I would like to thank Serguei Oushakine, who teaches me to be an anthropologist, and Carol Greenhouse, who brought such a wonderful group together with such a challenging assignment for this volume.

1. The trope of the “normal country” was an important part of the vocabulary of the time, though everyone was a bit unclear on just what a normal country was. Figures like Bokros and Gaidar were admired in the West as the true reformers in the 1990s, though they were often controversial in their own countries. After his program was rejected in Hungary, Bokros went to work for the World Bank. After his programs produced mass poverty in Russia, Gaidar became director of the Institute of the Economy in Transition in Moscow, a position from which he still publicly criticizes the Russian government for failing to adopt harsher neoliberal reforms.

2. By contrast, in World War II, Russian industrial production dropped by “only” 24 percent.

3. This was in fact done in practice through alterations in technical rules, obscure to pensioners, which changed the way that working years were counted and the way that the base salary on which the pensions were to be computed was selected. The end result was a cut for some pensioners and a rise for others. For example, in one pensioner couple I know, the husband’s pension was reduced because he had worked all of his life and retired at a high salary, and the changing pension rules caused both his service years and base salary to be reduced. In contrast, his wife’s pension was increased. She had worked fewer years (taking time out for child rearing) and had a lower salary throughout her career. The sum total of the two pensions after the adjustment, however, was less than the total of the two pensions before the recalculation. The changes—appearing merely as technical adjustments to obscure formulas—probably had the effect (and probably the intent) of reducing the state’s overall pension burden while simultaneously making it hard for all pensioners to unite around the changes because some gained while others lost and it was not transparent to pensioners that overall, in fact, they were losing ground.

4. Interestingly enough, the poll also asked citizens what should be done to raise the money that the court decision now required. Of those polled, 34 percent said to tax the rich, 30 percent said to decrease other state expenditures, and 25 percent said to decrease the income of politicians.

5. The Constitutional Court issues two kinds of decisions: (1) framework decisions (*postanovlenia*) that are published after a formal hearing and review by an entire senate of the court; and (2) delimitations (*opredelenia*) that are issued under a less stringent procedure and under the umbrella of a framework decision, providing more detail and elaboration of the general argument contained in a framework decision.

Chapter 4. Japan as Mirror

I would like to thank Carol Greenhouse for her thoughtful comments, and the participants in the neoliberalism and ethnography workshops held at Princeton University, which gave rise to the book. Conversations with my Princeton colleagues Sheldon Garon, David Leheny, and Carolyn Rouse were particularly valuable. The research was made possible by an Abe Fellowship, 2002–2003, awarded by the Japan Foundation and jointly sponsored with the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, and by a grant from the Princeton University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

1. Roger Goodman, citing Harada, emphasizes that the model was called a “welfare society” rather than a “welfare state” to emphasize that people should not depend on the state but rather family, community, and firm (Harada 1998: 198–202, in R. Goodman 2002: 16).

2. In fact class divides and differences of experience lay beneath this narrative of an inclusive middle class. Kelly notes that “class structure” has not always been accompanied by “class talk” or “class consciousness” in Japan (Kelly 2002: 236).

3. Thomas P. Rohlen’s ethnography of a Japanese bank in the early 1970s, *For Harmony and Strength* (1974), reveals that throughout a worker’s career at a large white-collar, “needs-based pay” remains the greatest proportion of an employee’s wage, followed by “job-based (ability) pay” (though the proportion of job-based to need-based grows as an employee moves up the ranks) (162).

4. This was made possible by the intimate relationships between companies, banks, and the Ministry of Finance, in which banks made loans to selected companies and the loans were in turn guaranteed by the government.

5. Marxist labor historians have promoted the view of postwar labor relations as the ultimate submission of workers’ rights to corporate needs, claiming that workers themselves eventually became instruments in their own exploitation, through work improvement groups such as “quality control circles,” etc. (Kumazawa 1996).

6. See, for example, Alfred P. Sloan’s *My Years with General Motors* (1964).

7. Matsushita’s collection of essays from the 1970s, *Not for Bread Alone*, reveals the strong sense of paternalism that accompanied this vision. A boss knows “what is good for” his underling, and the underling thus naturally abides by his wishes (see, for example, 1984: 32–34).

8. In fact the postwar period of the 1950s and 1960s was the first time when many middle-class women were able to become full time or “professional” housewives (*sengyō shufu*). Indeed the postwar years have witnessed extreme consolidation of the gendered division of labor—evidenced by increasingly conservative attitudes toward women’s roles in the family and workplace and increased women’s economic dependence.

9. In 1996 Japan spent 13.11 percent of its GDP on social security, just below the amount spent by the United States, and well below Germany (28.2 percent) and Sweden (33.1 percent). Pensions and health care make up 90 percent of Japan’s social security expenses (NIPSSR 2000, in Peng 2002: 436, 416).

10. A contraction of the Japanese phrase “free arbeiter,” a shortening of the phrase *free Arbeiter*, which combines the English *free* and German *Arbeiter* (“worker”) and is used to characterize part-time and temporary employment in Japan.

11. The young man reports, “When you go for an interview for part-time work, all of a sudden you get lectured about being a freeter and asked, ‘Why don’t you become a regular employee?’ ‘What?’ I thought. ‘Isn’t there a notice up saying, ‘Freeters

Welcome”? Aren’t you the one who’s recruiting?” [Baitto no mensetsu ni itta toki ni, furiitaa to iu koto de ikinari sekkyō saretari toka. Seishain ni ittara to ka. Sonna, “e tto, dou shite?” to iu kanji datta n desu keredomo. Naka ni wa, “Furiitaa Kangei” to iu tokoro mo aru janai desuka? Omae boshō shiteiru n darō te kanji] (Kosugi et al. 2000: 271; my translation).

12. Simultaneously, Yamada notes, this was a context in which, for the first time, a generation of parents who came of age during the high-growth period could afford to view their children as worthy investments (*nozomashii kachi*) rather than rushing them toward self-sufficiency (1999: 166).

13. Yamada (1999: 84–85) cites the Ministry of Health’s White Paper pointing to a “new” style of housewife who aspires to be fully supported but in addition aspires to pursue her own hobbies or a part-time “hobby-like” job (*shumi teki shigoto*).

14. Although growing numbers of married women in the 1970s began to return to work part-time, they rarely attained the level of financial independence, and although some of these women may have employed the language of “careerism” (*kyaria ūman*), Yamada describes this as a kind of “fantasy” of independence without any pain (*itami o tomoowanai jiritsu gensō*) (2000: 93).

15. The most comprehensive data set collected on the lifestyle choices of two cohorts of women, both in their late twenties and early thirties during the 1990s, reveals more concretely that the majority of women experience a decrease in income upon marriage and a particularly acute decrease in disposable income. Increasingly husbands’ income is insufficient to cover this loss, particularly when career women’s opportunity costs are factored in. The economic reasons for delaying marriage grow as women become more professional and as the high-growth male trajectory of male promotion frays (Higuchi and Ōta 2004: 126–29, 146–48).

16. Forger (2005) interviewed twenty-three single women who came to a popular Starbucks in Shinjuku and found that most of the women answered positively to questions about whether they spent their salaries largely on goods for themselves and negatively on whether they contributed rent to their households. And yet when asked what they thought about the “parasite single” phenomenon, many answered that such parasites were “selfish” and “not good” (*amari yokunai*) and that they did not identify with this stereotype. The results could be interpreted to suggest that the women, while parasitic in the material sense, were not fundamentally critical of the traditional norm and did not view themselves as oppositional. Many explicitly wished to get married and had a specific age in mind.

17. Particularly within emerging state pro-natalism and a medical lobby that sought to protect the bustling business of abortions among physicians, in the absence of better forms of birth control (see Ivry 2006: 444–45; Norgren 2001: 103–13).

18. The life choices made by a group of security traders, perceptively examined by Hirokazu Miyazaki (2003), reveal a similar set of tensions: the young Japanese traders wrestle with disjunctures between their commitment to the laissez-faire quality of financial markets and their commitment to shared social values. As if to reconcile these two, one trader sees in arbitrage not the legacy of Adam Smith but rather “a blueprint for a better society,” since arbitrage contains within it a utopian vision of efficient markets, equilibrium, and correct prices (Miyazaki 2003: 261).

Nancy Abelmann (2003), too, focusing on class mobility, reveals how South Korean citizens rely on the idiom of melodrama to articulate and resolve the tensions and contradictions presented to them by the dramatic social and political transformations experienced by post-1953 Korean citizens and also the disjunctures imposed by Westernization (see especially 62–84).

Chapter 5. Local Political Geography and American Political Identity

1. The federal government through the years has tweaked the criteria it uses to identify metropolitan areas, but the general concept has remained the same since the 1950 census. A metropolitan area consists of a county with a core urban area of at least 50,000 inhabitants along with adjacent counties that exhibit a high degree of economic and social integration. See United States Office of Management and Budget 2000.

2. Of course, having the relatively effortless opportunity to sign a petition requires significant dedication of time and energy on the part of the person collecting signatures.

3. But see Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995: 72, which, using another survey instrument, found increases in the percentages of survey respondents reporting that they had contacted a local official, worked with others on a local problem, and were active in a community problem-solving organization. See also Putnam's reasons for discounting Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's contradictory evidence (2000: 449 n. 30).

4. To make better sense of the impact of population size on civic engagement, it is helpful to adopt the intellectual framework proposed by political scientists Verba, Schlozman, and Brady in their classic study of political participation, *Voice and Equality* (1995). In their civic volunteerism model, they argue that political participation is a function of personal motivation or interest, capacity in terms of education and material resources, and the recruitment networks in which individuals are enmeshed.

5. For an interesting discussion of the impact of immigration on social trust, see Hardin 2005.

6. Of course, simple rational choice models would still have a hard time explaining some forms of citizen participation regardless of community size. The probability of casting the deciding vote, for example, remains so small that it cannot offset even the minimal cost associated with voting. For a cogent analysis of rational choice modeling of the decision to vote, see Blais 2000.

7. Putnam sees evidence of declining social capital across almost all facets of American life, from voting for president to joining a bowling league. His magisterial work on the subject, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, examines possible causes for these declines. As noted in the text above, he lays part of the blame on city size. He goes on to discuss the impact of urban form, specifically suburban sprawl, a topic we take up below.

8. This is not a novel idea; see, for example, Constant 1988: 314.

9. New York City, with fifty-one seats on its city council, provides greater per capita access to its governing legislature than Los Angeles, which has less than half the population but only fifteen council members. Each New York City councilperson is responsible for approximately 156,000 constituents, whereas each Los Angeles councilperson has nearly 249,000. Many of the institutional remedies to low participation call for making local governance structures more political by rolling back the reforms pressed by good governance advocates during the Progressive Era. See Hajnal and Lewis 2003 and Wood 2002. This issue will be discussed below.

10. To spur electoral participation, localities also may allow mail-in ballots, open more polling places, or undertake a variety of other activities to decrease the cost of voting.

11. Some argue that law enforcement is nearly impossible without the public's "eyes on the street" and a general willingness in the community to cooperate with the authorities. See, e.g., D. Cole 1999.

12. For a reflection on the impact on community life caused by population loss in the old, industrial cities, see Suarez 1999.

13. A few baseball teams even relocated their ballparks to the suburbs.

14. Jackson's own working definition has four components: "function (non-farm residential), class (middle and upper status), separation (a daily journey to work), and density (low relative to older sections)" (K. Jackson 1985: 11).

15. Putnam, for example, takes this route (2000: 205–7). For cogent discussions of defining suburbs for the purpose of social scientific research see Gainsborough 2001: chap. 3; and J. E. Oliver 2001: 8–15.

16. Dolores Hayden captures the reality of the suburbanized landscape in the first few lines of her book chronicling metropolitan development in America: "Flying across the United States, airline passengers look down on dazzling, varied topography, yet from Connecticut to California, monotonous tracts of single-family houses stretch for miles outside downtowns of major cities. Subdivisions interrupt farms and forests. They crowd against the granite coast of Maine and push into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Next to residential areas lie highways, shopping malls, and office parks. They overwhelm small town centers" (2003: 3).

17. According to Kenneth Jackson, Americans have long preferred homeownership over renting and desired greater separation from both neighbors as well as the perceived problems of city life (1985: 11). Similarly, Hayden (2003) finds that the triple dream of suburbia—home, yard, and neighborhood—has long enticed Americans to move outward to the urban fringe.

18. Fishman argues that the suburban form captures a "complex and compelling vision of the modern family freed from the corruption of the city, restored to harmony with nature, endowed with wealth and independence yet protected by a close-knit, stable community" (Fishman 1987: x).

19. Downing influenced Calvert Vaux, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Alexander Jackson Davis, among others. See Jackson 1985: 63–86.

20. William Levitt, a prime mover behind the postwar mass production of suburban housing, rather famously quipped, "No man who owns his own house and lot can be a communist. He has too much to do" (Lacayo 1950).

21. The average square footage of new homes more than doubled from about 1,100 in the 1950s to 2,340 in 2003, while the average family size decreased by about one person (Wilson and Boehland 2005).

22. Jackson explains, "The evolution of the front porch is a microcosm of the decline of community. In the half-century before World War II verandas were simply de rigueur. They were places for observing the world, for meeting friends, for talking, for knitting, for shelling peas, for courting, and for half a hundred other human activities. The front porch was the physical expression of neighborliness and community" (K. Jackson 1985: 280).

23. As Jackson puts it, "No longer forced outside by the heat and humidity, no longer attracted by the corner drugstore, and no longer within walking distance of relatives, suburbanites often choose to remain in the family room. When they do venture out, it is often through a garage into an air-conditioned automobile. Streets are no longer places to promenade and to meet, but passageways for high-powered machines" (K. Jackson 1985: 281).

24. Quoted in Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000: 62.

25. Even visiting neighborhood friends in a community of McMansions requires a drive.

26. A 1989 report by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) asserts that homeowners associations "account for the most signif-

icant privatization of local government responsibilities in recent times” (ACIR 1989: 18).

27. This quotation is Judge Howard Kestin’s summarization of Hannaman’s testimony in *Committee for a Better Twin Rivers v. Twin Rivers Homeowners’ Association*, 383 N.J. Super. 22 (Sup. Ct. App. Div. 2006).

28. Quorums are difficult to generate in many associations; interest in running for office is even scarcer. One survey of association board members found half characterizing residents of their community as apathetic. See Dilger 1992: 140.

29. Warner continues: “Nor were the opponents of annexation slow to point out the high level of city services maintained by Boston meant higher taxes, and further they frankly stated that independent suburban towns could maintain native American life free from Boston’s waves of incoming poor immigrants” (1962: 164).

30. Some would argue that Americans are asked to cast a ballot too many times a year. Elections for the federal, state, and local representatives are not always concurrently held. Party supporters are asked to vote in primaries as well. Elections for special districts and public schools are sometimes held separately too. All this may create voter fatigue, artificially depressing turnout.

31. Curtis Wood’s study of fifty-seven cities with populations between 25,000 and 1 million found average voter turnout between 1993 and 2000 to be 34 percent (2002: 223).

32. Between 1974 and 1994, the number of candidates running for local offices dropped by 15 percent, despite increasing numbers of local governments (Putnam 2000). Seven Californian municipalities canceled elections in 2003 (Falcone 2003).

33. Reformers were most successful in the western cities during the Progressive Era, and the reform-style institutional structures have been frequently adopted in the years since by newly established municipalities across the country, especially in the suburbs, making widespread these participatory weaknesses. We are quick to note, however, that it would be inaccurate to think of local government structures as coming in two types: reformed and political. Rather, there has been a widespread melding of institutional form. See Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood 2004; Frederickson and Johnson 2001.

34. Reacting against the unseemly graft and corruption inherent in machines, these reformers attempted to clean up local politics by instilling a greater professionalism and business-like efficiency in the administration of local government. See Murphy 2002: 63–85.

35. Wood finds that election timing is the “single largest predictor” of turnout in local elections. Concurrent elections see turnout increase by 29 percent (2002: 225–26). Hajnal and Lewis (2003) find a 36 percent increase in turnout when local elections are held concurrently with presidential elections in Californian cities.

36. Some also saw the formation of special districts and authorities as a way to overcome the tax and debt limitations of small municipal governments by regionalizing service provision (N. Burns 1994).

37. Since the civil rights movement, many have argued that larger and more diverse constituencies are more likely and able to promote encompassing public interests. See, e.g., McConnell 1966.

38. Some argue, for example, that those metropolitan areas with the most fragmented school districts, and hence the most competition among school districts, see improvements in education. See Chubb and Moe 1990.

39. Schneider goes on to claim that “the most difficult thing to do in politics these days is to sell means-tested programs to suburban voters. They know that they will end up paying for the programs and that the benefits will go to people of more modest means” (W. Schneider 1992: 39).

40. Monterey Park, California, provides just one example of a suburban community serving as a magnet for immigrants, in this case people from China. See Horton 1996.

41. The widest gap exists in the South and West where low-income families are not as confined to the central cities as in the older metropolitan regions of the Northeast and Midwest.

42. See Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; but also note the findings in Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996, emphasizing that while tolerance and some other civic attitudes may rise with absolute levels of education, participation seems to increase only based on higher relative levels of education.

Chapter 6. Urbanizing the San Juan Fiesta

1. See, for example Duno Gottberg 2004; Hernández 2004; Jaimes Quero 2003; Cañizales 2004; Herrera Salas 2004 and 2005; Iturrieta 2000; Salas 2004; and Delgado Bello 2002.

2. I am grateful to Jesús “Chucho” García and the Fundación Afroamerica for providing me with copies of these images from their archives.

Chapter 7. Neoliberalism, Satirical Protest, and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign

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1. See Harvey 2003: 166–67 for an illustrative list. In this volume, see chapters 2, 8, 6, and 9 by Scheppele, Makhulu, Fernandes, and Albro. For an anthropological overview of neoliberalism, see Gledhill 2004, and on the historically contingent relationship of neoliberalism to globalization, and anthropological approaches to both, see Edelman and Haugerud 2005.

2. Stephen Duncombe’s phrase (2002: 82).

3. A slippage illustrated by Makhulu’s chapter on South Africa (chapter 8) and Scheppele’s on Hungary (chapter 3).

4. See, for example, Harvey 2003: chaps. 4–5; N. Smith 2005; Hardt and Negri 2000 and 2004; Graeber 2001 and 2002; Edelman 2001 and 2005; Nash 2005; and Goodwin and Jasper 2003; among many other writings on this topic.

5. On why the neoliberal state is “an unstable and contradictory political form”

that departs from its theoretical template, which prescribes “strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade,” see Harvey 2005: chap. 3.

6. See Zulaika’s analysis (chapter 2) of how the war on terror frames politics so that democratic policies are subordinated to market fundamentalism and a national security state.

7. On neoliberalism’s contingencies, see chapter 4 by Borovoy, which shows how Japan has avoided or delayed adoption of neoliberal economic policies advocated by the United States, and how economic shifts in Japan contribute to reshaping forms of individualism, especially among college students.

8. On this discomfort zone in American politics, see Fraser and Gerstle 2005; Krugman 2003; and Frank 2004. Neoliberals believe economic justice is to be found in the free market, as Greenhouse notes (Introduction, this volume). In the free market (they would argue) inequality can become temporary and put to good use by arbitrageurs.

9. I address elsewhere (Haugerud, n.d.) the history of this organization, which emerged in 1999 as an offshoot of the Boston economic justice organization United for a Fair Economy (<http://www.faireconomy.org>). That organization’s former “minister of culture,” Andrew Boyd, helped to found the satirical Billionaires for Forbes in 1999, Billionaires for Bush (or Gore) in 2000, and Billionaires for Bush in 2004 (see Boyd 1999, 2002a, 2002b).

10. The Billionaires for Bush were registered during the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign as an independent 527 PAC (after section 527 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code), which meant they could take partisan stances and retain nonprofit status as long as they did not coordinate with the parties or candidates they support. They describe themselves on their Web site (in irony mode) as “a grassroots political action committee advocating for the rights and interests of people of absolutely fabulous wealth” (<http://www.billionairesforbush.com>).

11. Both videos are available on YouTube and on the Billionaires for Bush Web site (<http://www.billionairesforbush.com>). See also Dwyer 2008.

12. A *Wall Street Journal* article mentions their appearance during the 2008 Republican convention: “‘Lobbyists for McCain’ dressed in dark power suits. . . . The aim, the group said, was to call attention to what it called lobbyists’ influence over the Republican campaign agenda” (Gamerman 2008).

13. For example, Howard Zinn (2003: 650) quotes a *New York Times* poll in 1994 that showed that “65 percent of those polled said that ‘it is the responsibility of government to take care of people who can’t take care of themselves.’”

14. An example of culture jamming Naomi Klein (2002: 282) offers: “with a slight turn of the imagery knob, the now-retired Joe Camel turns into Joe Chemo, hooked up to an IV machine. That’s what’s in his future, isn’t it?” “Ad busting” refers to parodies or subversions of advertisements.

15. According to the nonpartisan U.S. Congressional Budget Office, and as reported in the *New York Times*, “fully one-third of President Bush’s tax cuts in the last three years have gone to people with the top 1 percent of income, who have earned an average of \$1.2 million annually” (Andrews 2004).

16. A flash mob, according to the Word Spy Web site, is “a large group of people who gather in a usually predetermined location, perform some brief action, and then quickly disperse.” Such actions are coordinated by electronic text messaging, and “to protect the planned serendipity of each event, participants aren’t told exactly what the mob is supposed to do until just before the event happens” (<http://www.wordspy.com/words/flashmob.asp> [accessed 17 September 2004]).

17. At this July 2004 street action outside the large post office opposite New York’s

Pennsylvania Station, the Billionaires invited passersby to sign a giant birthday card for George Bush. Displaying a birthday cake and a large cardboard cutout of the state of Ohio wrapped in red ribbon and a bow, the Billionaires called out: “He’s the best president money can buy!” and “What do you give the man who has everything? The election!” and “We are giving the state of Ohio to the president along with all the other swing states!”

18. I thank Noelle Mole, who was present with me at that event, for this interview (on audiotape).

19. Major media are those with readership or outreach to over 250,000 people, including national daily newspapers, television and radio broadcasts, magazines and local newspapers. While working to reach “mainstream” national corporate media, the Billionaires also received substantial coverage by alternative print and broadcast media and videographers. Between January 2000 and June 2007, more than 550 articles about the satirical Billionaires appeared in print news media, as analyzed in Haugerud, n.d.

20. Thus the Billionaires’ strategy is intended as an adaptation to the kinds of political biases, silences, and limitations of corporate American news media that are examined by Robert McChesney (1999) and publications by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR, at <http://www.fair.org>), among many others. Corporate news media, argue observers such as McChesney in his book *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, often favor official positions, and downplay, ignore or discredit the substance and rationality of alternative views.

21. The ranks of actual billionaires are divided. Some—such as George Soros, Warren Buffett, and members of the Rockefeller family—adopt progressive public positions on wealth and taxes that catch many by surprise (see Haugerud, n.d., on this issue).

22. McLeod and Hertog (1999: 323–24) note that there has been little research on “the impact that news coverage has on the protest groups themselves” and that “the nature of news coverage that a protest group receives may affect group dynamics such as internal solidarity, boundary maintenance and coalition formation.”

23. See “The World’s Richest People,” *Forbes.com*, at http://www.forbes.com/maserati/billionaires2004/bill04land_print.html (accessed September 21, 2004).

24. Parental income is a “better predictor of whether someone will be rich or poor in America than in Canada or much of Europe,” notes the *Economist* (June 17, 2006, p. 29).

25. Peter Ian Asen (2004), however, suggests that “Frank is often too focused on the economic to allow that there is something rational about working class conservatism.” And Jeremy Varon (2005) writes that “Frank asserts the primacy of the economic so forcefully that culture becomes little more than a repository for misplaced economic grievances.” Larry Bartels (2005) argues that “For church-goers as for non-churchgoers, partisanship and voting behavior are primarily shaped by economic, not cultural issues.”

26. Cf. Rodgers and Macedo’s chapter in this volume on local and regional variations in American civic engagement through formal government institutions as well as nongovernmental institutions and groups.

27. On the latter idea, see also Adorno 2002; and Frank and Weiland 1997, for a discussion of the commodification of dissent.

28. Neoliberalism, as Gledhill (2004: 340) writes, entails “the measurement of social worth in terms of consumption and marketed ‘life-style’ symbols.”

Chapter 8. The Question of Freedom

Note to epigraph: Holt's mention of 1838 refers to the abolition of slavery in Jamaica. See Holt 1992: xxi–xxv.

1. I refer here to the principles of the 1955 “Freedom Charter” whose status as manifesto underwrote the purported aims of the anti-apartheid struggle.

2. While the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission represented one public attempt to address gross human rights violations and reparations, it was not asked to deliberate on broader problems of structural violence and redistribution (see Morris 2005; Wilson 2001).

3. “A better life for all” has been the campaign slogan of the African National Congress (ANC) since the first democratic elections in 1994.

4. During this period the apartheid economy entered a period of crisis in which construction freezes signaled a decline in the social wage.

5. The term *Coloured* refers to South Africans of mixed descent who were regarded as second-class citizens under apartheid and effectively drove a political wedge between the White minority and Black majority populations in the country.

6. The 1913 Land Act set in motion the systematic dispossession of urban and rural Blacks.

7. Philippi was originally farmland and although a few farms still exist, these have been largely supplanted by an extensive peri-urban zone.

8. Deriving from the “location system,” whose nineteenth century architect, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, imagined the locations as primarily jurisprudential geographies through which the civilizing project might be achieved. The location system brought Africans under colonial legal control, thus superseding any preexisting “native” authority (see Chidester 1996). The locations would later come to describe, on one hand, areas within the city to which African labor was relegated (in Zulu, *ikasi*) and, on the other, a place defined by Blacks themselves, namely the “township”—a place of *kasi kul'ca* or “location culture.” Lindsay Bremner has recently argued that Soweto, “unlike the singularity of its former image . . . is a site of multiple re-imaginings and re-inventions” (2004: 140).

9. Arguably, efforts to attain access to affordable water and electricity have emerged as central struggles with the state and derive much of their momentum not only from the fact that they index basic material needs, but that these in their turn constitute fundamental ideological differences on which the new dispensation has been built. These differences or, rather, antitheses of political position have enabled the state to invoke, at least rhetorically, the need for redistribution and the realization of substantive citizenship, and at the same time to move toward market fundamentalism in *official* economic policy. This shift has brought about marginalization of the majority and through a process of privatization the commodification of bare life itself (see for example Khan and Pieterse 2004; Desai and Pithouse 2004). Protest politics in South Africa have been reanimated as a consequence of the failures of service and housing delivery (see for example Sidumo and Mbiza 2008).

10. “Hire purchase” enables consumers to take the item home having made a small deposit on the total cost of the purchase. (By contrast, under a “layaway” plan, the item is literally “laid away” by the seller until such time as the consumer has paid the cost of the item in its entirety, usually with a transaction fee.) Hire purchase involves an agreed upon installment plan—actually “hiring” or renting the goods on a monthly basis with interest—at the end of which the item may be bought outright or returned.

11. At the time, one hundred Rand (R100) was worth approximately eighteen to twenty U.S. dollars.

12. Arguably that portion of household income earmarked for use outside the conventional logics of domestic consumption is thus formally removed from circulation.

13. The official term for pass laws is “influx control regulations.”

Chapter 9. Neoliberal Cultural Heritage and Bolivia's New Indigenous Public

1. For the experiences of other countries, see especially the chapters by Scheppele, Makhulu, Fernandes, Goodman, Borovoy, and Miyazaki in this volume.

2. For further descriptions of Bolivia's neoliberal reforms, see Healy and Paulson 2000; Shultz 2005; and Kohl and Farthing 2006.

3. The present administration of Evo Morales has since successfully engineered a new constitutional referendum, which significantly extends the rights of the country's indigenous majority. It was formally approved by Bolivia's legislature in December 2007 and ratified through a popular referendum in January 2009.

4. I am borrowing this term from Carol Greenhouse (personal communication).

5. If the administration of Evo Morales has undone some of the legislation supporting Bolivia's neoliberal state between 1985 and 2005, it has not altogether abandoned a market-based approach to the country's economy.

6. For examples of such treatments, see Phillips 1998 and Hale 2004.

7. For more complete accounts of Bolivia's 1952-era national project, see Albro 1998; H. Klein 1993; and Larson 1998.

8. Further discussion of the social category of *cholo* in its Bolivian variants is available in Albro 2001 and 2005; and Bouysse-Cassagne and Saignes 1992.

9. The literature on so-called *chola* market women in the Andes is growing, including Albro 2000; Paulson 1996; Seligmann 2004; Stephenson 1999; and Weismantel 2001.

10. Initial fieldwork in Quillacollo was conducted over a two-year period, 1993–1995, with shorter follow-up visits in 2001 and 2003.

11. In fact, during the years of large-scale protest since 2000, there have been several widely reported cases of national political authorities using the word “cholo” to dismiss or discredit publicly the leadership of successive protests.

Chapter 10. Neoliberal Education

1. Diversity probably belongs to this last group.

2. What shifters denote is a point or moment in or with respect to an instance of discourse. Thus, their referent—who, what, when, where—is entirely context specific. Examples include past tense markers, time or space adverbs such as *now/then*, *here/there*, or personal pronouns *I/we* and *you*: the interpretation of all of which depends on who is speaking, when, where, and so on.

3. Hamilton College n.d.a.

4. Hamilton College 2009: 9.

5. Hamilton College n.d.b.

6. This is a self-assessment, in which one says how motivated one is to use a given skill and how proficient one is in it. Self-assessment of proficiency can vary considerably and the procedure does not appear to control for over- or undervaluation of one's own proficiency.

7. See the forms at the Common Application Web site (Common Application n.d.)
8. Student organization descriptions were quoted from Hamilton College n.d.c.
9. Training manual quotations from *Hamilton College Office of Residential Life Resident Advisor Manual*, Fall 2003.
10. Foucault (1988) characterizes such processes as technologies of the self.

Chapter 11. *Harlem's Pasts in Its Present*

1. This, obviously, is a way of thinking about historical trace that is deeply indebted to Walter Benjamin's work. See his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1968) and *The Arcades Project* (2002).
2. Interviews with local Italian American residents, March–May 2005; also Father Peter Rofrano's comments during a Municipal Art Society tour, "The Italian Dimension of Spanish Harlem," led by Terri Cook, on April 3, 2005.
3. Orsi 1992 details a number of these encounters.
4. James Clifford's work on this topic has been especially influential; see Clifford 1988 and 1997.
5. When asked during the summer of 2005, Peggy Hammerle-McGuire, the art curator of the National Museum of Catholic Art and History (NMCAH), noted that they would soon bring the "El Barrio" exhibit to the museum. In using the concept of surrogation I do want to stress that the broader cultural-psychic work of place-making here may not be either consciously or intentionally discriminatory.
6. "El Barrio," exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, visited June 1, 2005.
7. In conversations with a wide range of New Yorkers, including many who live in Central and West Harlem, I have witnessed surprise at the fact of Mexican presence in East Harlem.
8. Many Mexican migrants are less than fluent in Spanish, having various indigenous languages like Maya or Nahuatl as their first languages.
9. Conversations at St. Cecilia's Church, June 2005.
10. Insights from conversations with area business owners as well as the executive director of the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation, Elizabeth Colon, in May–August 2005.

Chapter 12. *Performing Laïcité*

Research in Algeria and France from 1992 to 1994 was generously supported by the American Institute for Maghribi Studies, the Fulbright Institute of International Education, the Social Science Research Council, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation. An earlier approach to this material appears in Goodman 2005. I am grateful to Carol Greenhouse for inviting me to rethink this case in relation to processes of neoliberalism. I also thank the participants at the Princeton conference for their constructive feedback. Finally, I thank John Bowen and Mary Steedly for their helpful comments on a previous version of this chapter, presented at the American Anthropological Association 2005 annual meeting.

1. Algerians from Amkan have been emigrating to Paris since the second decade of the twentieth century. See J. Goodman 2005 for more on Amkan immigrants in Paris. On Berber immigrant populations in France, see Silverstein 2004 and Khellil 1979. On Algerian immigration to France, see Sayad 1977 and Talha 1989, among others.
2. On political-economic reform in Algeria, see Abderrezak 2002; Akacem 2004;

Bonner, Reif, and Tessler 2004; Cavatorta 2002; Dillman 1998; Entelis 1997; Joffé 2002; Layachi 2000; Stadler 1998; among others.

3. Algerian law 87-15 of July 21, 1987, granted the right to form locally based non-political associations without obtaining prior governmental authorization. Law 90-31 of December 4, 1990, extended this right to nationally based associations. See Kapil 1990.

4. For some of the first accounts of what took place in October 1988, see *Organisation révolutionnaire des travailleurs*, n.d.; Aissou et al. 1988; Charef 1990; among others.

5. For accounts of this decade of insurgency, see Martinez 2000 and H. Roberts 2003, among others.

6. Bradford Dillman similarly reports that during his field research (in 1989–1990), when he asked Algerians what would bring the country out of crisis, the most common response was “We have to change people’s mentalities” (Dillman 1992).

7. Gender was a vexed discursive site from the opening moments of colonial rule. In an introduction to a collection of Kabyle Berber poetry, French colonel Adolphe Hanoteau highlighted the subordinate condition of Algerian women as a key justification for the French colonizing mission (Hanoteau 1867; see J. Goodman 2002). On representations of gender during colonialism, see also Clancy-Smith 1996. On gender as a site of contemporary political representations and debates, see Cheriet 2004.

8. On Berbers in relation to the Algerian state, see Chaker 1989; J. Goodman 2005; Maddy-Weitzman 2001; Mahé 2001; Ouerdane 1990; among others.

9. The two parties most aligned with Berber issues were the ultraliberal RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy), under the leadership of Said Sadi, and the more moderate FFS (Socialist Forces Front), led by Algerian revolutionary war hero Hocine Ait Ahmed.

10. The Berber Cultural Movement (*Mouvement Culturel Berbère*, MCB) began in 1980, following an insurgency of several months in the Kabyle region. See J. Goodman 2004 and 2005.

11. Zahra was referring to French law 81-909 of October 9, 1981, which modified the law of July 1, 1901, concerning the rights of associations organized by foreigners in France. See Benamrane 1983: 358.

Chapter 13. The “Daughters of Soul” Tour and the Politics and Possibilities of Black Music

1. Nina Simone recorded the original version of the song; British rockers the Animals scored a chart hit with their version.

2. For a concise overview of these images, see T. Rose 2003: 389–400.

3. I thank Judith Halberstam and Alice Echols for helping me develop this interpretation.

Chapter 14. Rags to Riches

1. U.S. Census Bureau, “State and County QuickFacts: Halifax County, North Carolina,” at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37083.html>, accessed January 18, 2006. These figures reflect the results of the 2000 census.

2. Friends International Christian University, “Accreditation,” at <http://www.ficu.edu/accreditation.htm>, accessed January 18, 2006.

3. At <http://www.anointedmedia.com/anointedcart/agora.cgi>, accessed January 15, 2006.

4. The “Woman Thou Art Loosed” Conference was founded by Bishop T. D. Jakes

as a follow-up to a sermon of the same title that he preached at Carlton Pearson's Azusa Conference in 1993. Like the sermon, the goal of the conference was to help heal the spiritual and emotional wounds of women. Over the years tens of thousands of women from around the country have gathered for this event.

5. The Azusa Street meetings of 1906 (from which Pearson borrowed his title) are noted by historians as where Christians first publicly associated the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues. The meetings, which began as an interracial body, were organized by the African American preacher William J. Seymour in 1906 in Los Angeles.

Chapter 15. The Temporality of No Hope

A slightly different version of this chapter has appeared in Japanese as “Toreda to kibo: Toki kara saitei e” (Traders and Hope: From Speculation to Arbitrage) in *Jinruigaku de sekai wo miru* (Seeing the World Through Anthropology), ed. Kasuga Naoki (Kyoto: Minerva-shobo, 2008). The research conducted in Japan from 1998 to 2006 was supported by the American Bar Foundation, the Abe Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council, and the American Council of Learned Societies with funds provided by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and Cornell University. Special thanks are due to Carol Greenhouse, Amy Levine, and Annelise Riles for helping me to clarify my argument.

1. I thank Professor Kazuo Matsuo and his students in his undergraduate seminar at Sophia University, Tokyo, for drawing attention to this novel. The novel has been extensively discussed in Japanese newspapers and popular magazines as well as in TV specials. See, e.g., “Jidai wo toraeru shukaku wa dokokara kurunoka? Murakami Ryu no yogenryoku” [Where Does the Capacity to Capture the Trend of the Time? On Murakami Ryu's Predictive Power], *Aera*, August 7, 2000; “Nihon no kibo no arika tou: Murakami Ryu no shosetsu sozai, chugakusei majiete toron, Nittere-kei” [Asking Where Hope Is in Japan: Nihon Television and Its Associate Stations Broadcast a Discussion Involving Middle School Students, the Subjects of Murakami Ryu's Novel], *Asahi Shinbun*, April 28, 2001, evening edition; “Murakami Ryu san, kaisha mo kazoku mo onaji koto, kojiri ga jiritsusuru shikanai” [Murakami Ryu Says, “The Company and the Family Are the Same; The Only Answer Is for Individuals to Become Independent], *Asahi Shinbun*, January 4, 2002; “*Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu* wo kankoshita Murakami Ryu-shi ni kiku, henka minu taisei / bunmyaku toi naosu” [Interview with Murakami Ryu, the Author of *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu*: Reexamining the Social System and Condition that Ignores Change], *Asahi Shinbun*, August 2, 2000, evening edition.

2. Murakami published these interviews in *Kibo no kuni no ekuzodasu shuzai noto* [Interview Notes for *Exodus in a Country of Hope*] (Murakami 2000).

3. <http://ryumurakami.jmm.co.jp/media.html>, accessed October 3, 2004; my translation.

4. *Kyoseichu* is a word coined by Murakami as a play on the word *kiseichu* (parasite) and can be roughly translated as “an insect in a symbiotic relationship with a human body.”

5. “Jidai wo toraeru shukaku wa dokokara kurunoka?”

6. Genda's more recent writings on hope are much more ambivalent about the category of hope (see, e.g., Genda 2006).

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